

THE LIFE AND DEATH OF
ROGER CASEMENT



ROGER CASEMENT, C.M.G.

From a photograph taken after the Congo Report

Frontispiece

THE LIFE AND DEATH OF ROGER CASEMENT

BY

DENIS GWYNN



'We are snared into doing things for which we get called names, and things for which we get hanged, and yet the spirit may well survive — survive the condemnation, survive the halter.' — JOSEPH CONRAD in *Lord Jim*.

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INTRODUCTION

FATE has played strange tricks with the memory of Roger Casement. Had he died two years earlier, on the eve of the Great War, he would still be remembered, and honoured in the school books, as the man who exposed the conditions of slavery and the appalling atrocities accompanying it, under which rubber was produced by the native tribes of the Congo and of Peru. Drifting into the consular service by chance at a comparatively late age, he attained a unique prestige and authority in British diplomacy.

Lord Lansdowne, as Foreign Minister, appointed him in 1902 to undertake a thorough personal investigation in the Congo. He performed that highly dangerous task with such courage and ability that the British Government issued his report as a white paper, sending it broadcast among the embassies of all the Powers and making it the principal and unassailable evidence in their attack upon the administration of King Leopold of Belgium. Eight years later, after a series of rapid promotions, he was deputed to conduct a still more arduous investigation, in a country even more remote and less explored.

In the swampy valley of the Putumayo River, Roger Casement was exposed at every turn to danger of death by poisoning or murder, even if he survived the risks of an intolerable climate. The ruthless report that he made upon the conditions of the rubber industry in the Putumayo was to be similarly adopted by the British Foreign Office, under another Foreign Minister, Sir Edward Grey, with unqualified confidence in its author and in the value of his report. It also was broadcasted as an unanswerable document, sent out to all the embassies, to bring pressure to bear upon Peru.

The prolonged physical and mental strain of those two investigations – which secured an immediate improvement in the treatment of the natives both on the Congo and on the Putumayo – reduced Roger Casement to a state of nervous wreckage before he retired from the consular service at the age of forty-eight. He had performed tasks that scarcely any other man living could have carried through. His knowledge of Africa, his power of winning the confidence of native tribes, his physique, his energy and courage and public spirit, had alone enabled the British Government to conduct investigations in remote countries with intolerable climates. He had strengthened its moral prestige enormously, as the Power that led the way in insisting upon alleviation of human suffering among peoples who were not even under British jurisdiction. And after twenty years of the British consular service, Casement retired, a nerve-racked wanderer, with an international reputation and a small pension which was to provide his only means of livelihood for the few years he could still hope to live with his shattered constitution.

Yet within two years of his retirement from the consular service his immense services to British prestige were to be forgotten and ignored. Instead, his name was to be treated as a synonym for traitor; and it is as the outstanding ‘traitor’ of the British Empire during the war that his name is to-day still widely known and remembered.

It would be difficult to imagine a more grotesque distortion of plain English meanings than to apply that epithet to the last stage of Roger Casement’s strange career. ‘No wise man now uses the word traitor at all,’ wrote Bernard Shaw in an article published soon after Casement’s execution under the title ‘Some Neglected Morals of the Irish Rising.’ ‘He who fights for the independence of his country may be an ignorant and disastrous fool: but he is not a traitor and will never be regarded as one by his fellow-countrymen. All the slain men and women of the Sinn Féin Volunteers fought and died for their country as sincerely as any soldier in Flanders has fought and died for his. Their contempt for pro-British Pacifists like myself was as

fiercely genuine as the contempt of our conscriptionists and military authorities for Mr. Clifford Allen.'

When war broke out Casement decided that his duty as an Irishman must lie in attempting to keep Ireland out of the war, and in enlisting the help of Germany, as well as of America, to provide arms for the training of an Irish Volunteer force to assert Ireland's claim to political independence. Throughout his self-imposed mission to Germany, it was continually present to his mind that what he was attempting could only lead him to the gallows.

That he made a fatal blunder, even from his own point of view as an Irish Nationalist, in ever leaving America to negotiate with the German Government, was apparent to him within the first few months of his arrival in Berlin. That he had miscalculated wildly, in his belief that he had only to appeal to the Irish prisoners of war in Germany for them to flock into an Irish Brigade, was apparent to him from the day of his first visit to the camp at Limburg. He had lost all faith in the plan for forming an Irish Brigade even before that agreement with the German Government was signed in December 1914, which stipulated explicitly that the Brigade was never to be used for any purpose but for the liberation of Ireland.

He had approached the Germans, as he would have approached any other Power with which England had become involved in war in 1914, with the curious proposal that they were merely to train the Irish soldiers and supply them with arms, but were never to have the slightest claim upon their services for any German purpose. And even in the early months of 1916, when the first intimation reached him – in his complete isolation from all his friends – of an insurrection being prepared in Ireland, his efforts were directed solely to obtaining arms for the Irish Volunteers in Ireland. As soon as he became aware that the Germans intended only to send a small consignment of captured Russian rifles, as a feeble gesture which they believed would satisfy their friends among the Irish-Americans, Casement's whole energies were spent upon attempting to convey word to Ireland that the landing of arms must on no

account be made the pretext for a futile and disastrous insurrection.

Only by immense personal efforts did he prevail at the last moment upon the German General Staff to allow him to go ahead of the transport ship to Ireland in a German submarine. He went ostensibly to give instructions as to where the arms were to be landed, but in reality to convey his warning at all costs that no insurrection must take place. The only glimmer of hope he saw in his abject despair was that the submarine would fall into British hands, and that publication of news of his own arrest would discourage any thought of a rising in Ireland. That his capture would inevitably result in his being sentenced to death and hanged was quite certain to him. His only fear was that it might conceivably suit British policy better, during the war, to have him certified as a criminal lunatic instead of hanging him. But he braved all risks with unflinching courage.

To describe such a man as a 'traitor' is a strange misuse of words. The present study of his career is an attempt to tell the story of his life as it appeared to himself. To obtain a true perspective of what he aimed at, it is necessary to recall the period shortly before the outbreak of the Great War, which has been largely forgotten, and seldom clearly understood.

He had returned after years of exile to his own part of Ireland, at a time when it was seething with political excitement. In those turgid years the Ulster Unionists were claiming as an inalienable right that they were entitled to defy any Act of Parliament that threatened their existing privileges. In asserting their revolutionary attitude they had surprisingly obtained, under the existing conditions of English party politics, the unqualified support of the English Conservatives led by Mr. Bonar Law. Monster meetings were held all over Ulster and in many parts of England which proclaimed the indefeasible right of Ulstermen to challenge the decision of the House of Commons, and to enforce 'their challenge by arms. Roger Casement, as an Ulster Protestant, returning to his own people with the prestige of a great servant of the British Empire, found

himself in acute conflict with the views which the majority of Ulstermen were asserting.

As an Ulsterman, he conceived that he had the same right as any other Ulsterman to organise armed support for whatever his own view of politics might dictate. So it was that within a few months of his return to Ireland he became one of the principal organisers of the Irish Volunteers. They were brought into existence to insist upon the establishment of an Irish Parliament when the authority of the House of Commons had been defied, and when the constitutional movement in favour of Home Rule, which had then reached the climax of years of effort, was seen to have broken down. He was certainly an exceptional figure among Ulster Protestants as an advocate of self-government; but there were a considerable number of Ulster Protestants who shared his view.

The common notion that Casement changed his political views only on the eve of the war – which was asserted so confidently by Lord Birkenhead as Attorney-General during the trial for High Treason – is untrue. Like many other Ulster Protestants in Irish history, Casement had developed strongly Nationalist views early in life. In the eighteen months which he spent in Ireland after the publication of his Congo report in 1903, he became intimately associated with a group of advanced Nationalists, many of them Protestants like himself, in East Ulster.

Without realising the situation which existed in Ireland at his return – when official Conservatism in England was spending all its resources upon the organisation of rebellion in Ulster – it is impossible to understand the very simple process of reasoning which led Casement to assist in organising a similar movement in Nationalist Ireland, and convinced him that self-government would never be won for Ireland by constitutional means.

Upon the strange story of his attempt to enlist an Irish Brigade among the prisoners of war in Germany it is now possible to throw much new light. I am indebted to several persons who had intimate knowledge of the prison camp for

permission to utilise a great deal of unpublished information. The story is further elucidated by the publication in Germany of Casement's own very full diary of his activities at the time.

It is natural that most people should think of his attempt to seduce the Irish prisoners from their allegiance in relation to conditions that did not develop until long afterwards. One thinks of prisoners worn out with years of captivity, of voluntary recruits or of conscripts torn from their ordinary civilian life, being invited, after years of heart-breaking confinement in German military prisons, to accept freedom as the reward for betraying their allegiance. But in fact, Casement's efforts to recruit the Irish Brigade had virtually ceased by February 1915. They had begun in the previous December, before the first battle of Ypres; and the Irish soldiers who had been gathered into Limburg camp were regular soldiers or reservists of many years' service. Many of them had only been in prison for a few weeks; others came straight to Limburg as their first prison camp. The great majority had been captured in the retreat from Mons. They had scarcely been stationed more than a few weeks in any hospital or prison before they were confronted by this mysterious Irishman, whose name they had never heard, who seemed to assume quite confidently that he had only to appeal to them as Irishmen and they would accept his invitation. Before Christmas of 1914 he had already seen the utter futility of his plan; and his later half-hearted attempts to do propaganda among them were little more than a demonstration of his own earnestness to impress the German Government, which suspected throughout that he was in Germany as a British spy.

He discovered quickly that his journey to Germany had been a colossal blunder. His impulsive temperament had led him wildly astray. Even the method which he employed to obtain recruits for his Irish Brigade was characteristic of his inability to appreciate any view but his own. To ask the regular soldiers who had taken part in the retreat from Mons to desert their regiments showed a strange blindness to realities. It was chiefly to the non-commissioned officers, who had almost

all been with their regiments for ten years at least, that he addressed his first appeal, believing they would respond immediately and that the rest would follow their example.

He had rejoiced in the formation of the Ulster Volunteers in defiance of the law. They had shown an example to the rest of Ireland which no one else had the courage to show before. They had made possible throughout Ireland the military organisation which would have been unthinkable before they had shown the way. Step by step, as an Ulster Nationalist, he devoted himself to promoting in the rest of Ireland the same policy and the same methods that the Ulster Unionists adopted.

When Casement went to Cork to assist in launching the Irish Volunteers there, the platform was even wrecked at the end of the meeting, because the crowd misunderstood the meaning of the speakers who called upon them to give three cheers for Sir Edward Carson. The Government then attempted belatedly to restrain both Volunteer movements by issuing a proclamation forbidding the importation of arms. It was defied in Ulster, when the Covenanters ran in their cargo of German rifles at Larne in May. And it was Casement who organised and obtained finances for the corresponding coup in the South, when the Irish Volunteers succeeded in landing their cargo of rifles at Howth in July. But more than any other incident, in these exciting months when Europe was on the eve of the conflagration that broke out in August, events in Ireland were dominated by the Curragh mutiny, when the cavalry officers led by General Gough refused to march against Ulster. They would not go north even to guard the military depots from the danger of being raided, yet they were reinstated in their commands by an intimidated War Minister.

For months the Unionist agitation in Ulster had included the open preaching of sedition to the army. Cabinet Ministers had been even threatened by Mr. Bonar Law, in the House of Commons, that they would be 'lynched in London' if they dared to order the army to reinforce the civil authority in Ulster. The long campaign of political intrigue within the army – directed by the tireless resourcefulness of Sir Henry Wilson

(as the publication of his own diaries has revealed) – culminated in open mutiny by the officers at the Curragh.

To Casement the episode appeared as only one more example that might profitably be followed by the Irish Nationalists. If the Unionists were to preach sedition to the officers, why should not the Nationalists preach the same doctrine among the men? If the army was to be taught to interfere in politics, there were two sides of the question for them to hear. And if war had not intervened, Casement's propaganda as an Irish Nationalist among the Irish regiments at home might easily have been much more successful among Irish soldiers and reservists than in a prison camp, when they were fresh from the first battles of a European war in which thousands of their comrades had already been killed.

*

'Ireland is treated to-day among the nations of the world as if she were a convicted criminal,' said Casement in his speech from the dock after he had been sentenced to death. 'If it be treason to fight against such an unnatural fate as this, then I am proud to be a rebel, and I shall cling to my rebellion with the last drop of my blood.' He knew that he would be execrated in England as a 'traitor.'

But a much more detestable form of obloquy was to be deliberately associated with his name, when he had no means of contradicting it. Not until long after his death was the imputation against his moral character openly formulated; but in the weeks when the appeal against his death sentence was being heard before the Court of Criminal Appeal, a deliberate campaign to discredit him on moral grounds was undertaken by some mysterious agency in Scotland Yard. In recent years the stories that were put into circulation through the clubs, through the House of Commons, and in private conversations, have found their way with increasing frequency into print, and it is impossible to leave the accusations unnoticed.

Quite suddenly, and to the amazement and consternation of his innumerable friends of pre-war days, the story became

current all over London that Casement was a moral pervert. Undeniable evidence of his immorality, it was stated, was in the hands of Scotland Yard. To those who had known him for years without ever suspecting the least suggestion of the kind, the story seemed incredible. But the evidence was not only said to be available; it was produced and handed round in photographic reproductions, in every quarter where any suggestion of sympathy with him had become apparent, after the petitions for his reprieve had been prepared and signed by many influential names.

Who was responsible for the circulation of the stories and of the photographic reproductions will doubtless never be known. The story was most skilfully put into circulation that Casement had for years led a life of gross perverted immorality, and that Scotland Yard had in its possession a diary in his own handwriting, which consisted of a detailed record of indecent experiences in London and Paris and Putumayo. It seemed incredible that anyone but a lunatic could have kept such a diary. But those who expressed doubts were at once confronted with photographs, of which many copies must apparently have been made. They showed pages of the diary containing an account of gross indecencies, unmistakably in Casement's own handwriting.

Copies of these photographed pages were shown in many of the London clubs; they were handed round the House of Commons and in the Press Gallery; they were shown to important journalists who were known to sympathise with Casement; they were even sent to America to be shown to some of his more influential friends there. In America they were shown, amongst others, to John Quinn, who was one of the leading lawyers in New York and standing counsel to the Standard Oil Company. He was one of the most influential Irish-Americans, and had known Casement intimately, and he was appalled at what he was shown. He knew Casement's handwriting well; and though he suggested that a handwriting expert ought to be consulted, he could not deny that he believed it to be Casement's.

In London it was shown to some of the signatories of the appeal for his reprieve. They, too, had been utterly incredulous, but were reduced to silence when they saw the photographed extracts. The photographs were shown to certain persons in court when the appeal was being heard. Redmond especially was confronted with the evidence, and it prevented any further effort on his part to lift a hand in Casement's defence. But the manner in which the diary had been obtained – whether (as some said) he had it with him when he landed from the German submarine, or whether (as other explanations asserted) it had been seized in lodgings where he had formerly stayed in London or in Dublin – was never stated. In recent years, Sir Basil Thomson, in his reminiscences of Scotland Yard and the war, has alluded openly to this document in its archives. And General Wyndham Childs, who succeeded Sir Basil Thomson as the head of Scotland Yard, has also alluded to it specifically.

That the document existed, and presumably still exists in Scotland Yard would appear to be beyond question. But that it was Casement's own diary is at least doubtful. Those who spent months in terms of closest intimacy with him are utterly incredulous concerning it; and two at least of his closest friends have special grounds for refusing to believe that it was what it purported to be. Both his published reports on the atrocities on the Congo and the Putumayo stated openly that he had submitted evidence which was too indecent to print. When he was preparing his report upon the Putumayo inquiry, he brought back with him to England and to Ireland a mass of documents containing evidence against the worst offenders whom he placed on his black list, and whose immediate arrest he was urging vainly upon the Foreign Office. He talked much to his more intimate friends about the evidence that he had collected; and it is a curious fact that he mentioned to several of them that, among the documents which he was sending to the Foreign Office, was an indecent diary of precisely the character which he was afterwards accused of having kept himself. That diary was part of his official dossier concerning one of the South American agents of Arana Brothers, who had

spent much of his time in Europe. What happened to his papers is presumably a State secret that will not be disclosed.

In an attempt to investigate the matter the present writer made a formal application to the Home Secretary some months ago. I explained that I was making a study of Casement's life, stating that I had collected considerable evidence concerning the photographed copies of the diary, and that the authenticity of the diary had been vehemently denied by Casement's closest friends. I asked whether I might be allowed to see the diary, as allusions to it had been published by several persons who had had access to the official documents. I asked further whether I could be informed how the diary came into possession of Scotland Yard; because the conflict of opinions concerning that point had been one of the chief reasons for doubting its authenticity. A formal reply was sent stating that the Home Secretary was considering the matter, and after some days I received the following reply: -

‘THE HOME SECRETARY,
11th July 1930.

‘My dear Gwynn,

‘I have carefully considered your letter of the 21st June about Casement's diaries.

‘On inquiry I find that it was decided long ago not to make any official statement as to the existence or non-existence of these diaries. I have carefully considered whether it is still necessary to maintain that rule, and there seem to me to be very good reasons why in the public interest it is desirable not to break the official silence.

‘You mention that reference to these diaries has been made by Sir Basil Thomson, but any such statements were completely unauthorised.

‘Yours sincerely,
J. R. CLYNES.’

The unwillingness of Scotland Yard even to admit or deny the existence of the diaries certainly does not strengthen the evidence which has of late been quoted with such confidence

against Casement's character. Nor does the fact (of which I also have information) that after Casement's execution in August 1916, Sir Edward Grey cabled from the Foreign Office to Washington – where John Quinn was informed of the fact – that he forbade any use to be made of the unofficial propaganda that had been issued from Scotland Yard.

One other detail may be worth recording. My first acquaintance with these stories concerning Casement was in the summer of 1917, when I was attached to the Ministry of Information, having been invalided from active service in France. The late G. H. Mair, who was one of the principal officers of the Ministry, made no secret, among the wide circle of his friends, that it was he who had been responsible for having the diary copied. He claimed to have read it, and I remember that he referred to one passage describing an incident in London. I regret now that I made no further inquiries about the matter at the time. Mair – who was closely in touch with several Liberal Cabinet Ministers – told me also (whether this was accurate or not I cannot say) that the Cabinet had seriously considered whether they would drop the prosecution of Casement for High Treason and make him the centre of a second Oscar Wilde trial instead, in order to discredit him finally in Ireland.

At any rate the Cabinet did not do anything of the kind. The propaganda emanating from Scotland Yard had served its purpose in silencing any campaign for his reprieve; and Casement's legal advisers were apparently threatened that, if they pleaded for any mitigation of his sentence, they must be prepared to face a very different charge, in which the only possible defence would have been to plead lunacy.

In this connection it is interesting to note the reference to Casement's mental condition which I have italicised in the following statement which was issued by the Coalition Government on 4th August 1916, the day after his execution: 'All the circumstances in the case of Roger Casement were carefully and repeatedly considered by the Government before the decision was reached not to interfere with the sentence of the law. He was convicted and punished for treachery of the worst kind to

the Empire he had served, as a willing agent of Germany. The Irish rebellion resulted in much loss of life, both among soldiers and civilians. Casement invoked and organised German assistance to the insurrection. In addition, though himself for many years a British official, he undertook the task of trying to induce soldiers of the British Army, prisoners in the hands of Germany, to forswear their oath of allegiance and join their country's enemies. Conclusive evidence has come into the hands of the Government since the trial that he had entered into an agreement with the German Government, which explicitly provided that the brigade which he was trying to raise from among the Irish soldier prisoners might be employed in Egypt against the British Crown. Those among the Irish soldier prisoners in Germany who resisted Casement's solicitations of disloyalty were subjected to treatment of exceptional severity by the Germans; some of them have since been exchanged as invalids, and have died in this country, regarding Casement as their murderer. *The suggestion that Casement left Germany for the purpose of trying to stop the Irish rising was not raised at the trial, and is conclusively disproved, not only by the facts there disclosed, but by further evidence which has since become available. Another suggestion, that Casement was out of his mind, is equally without foundation. Materials bearing on his mental condition were placed at the disposal of his counsel, who did not raise the plea of insanity.* Casement's demeanour since his arrest, and throughout and since the trial, gave no ground for any such defence, and, indeed, was sufficient to disprove it.'

That statement was obviously intended to corroborate the accusations which were spread from Scotland Yard at the time, but which the Home Office is no longer willing to confirm. But the previous sentence, also italicised, contains a statement which is demonstrably untrue. Casement's detailed diary of his activities in Germany, which is now deposited in the National Library in Dublin, proves quite conclusively that his one object in going to Ireland in the submarine, instead of going on the transport ship with its cargo of rifles, was to stop the rising. Other evidence which will be found in this book abundantly

confirms his diary. Seeing that the Government's statement was wholly untrue on that vital matter, its hint at the 'materials bearing on his mental condition' is untrustworthy as evidence.

It is well to remember also that at the time when these allegations against Casement's private life were broadcast, mendacious propaganda was even regarded as a patriotic duty, and any story tending to discredit an enemy was eagerly believed. No man in his time was ever exposed to such fierce limelight upon all his actions, whether in public or in private, as Roger Casement. When he risked his life in undertaking his long mission of inquiry to the remotest parts of King Leopold's domain on the Congo, he was spied upon in all his movements; and every conceivable effort was made to discredit his character as an investigator after his report was published. The British Foreign Office under Lord Lansdowne staked its own reputation on his veracity and integrity. If anything could possibly have been found to discredit him, it would have been relentlessly used, in the tremendous campaign of personal abuse to which he was afterwards subjected, in America not less than in Europe.

Eight years later, when Sir Edward Grey appointed him to conduct a similar and still more important inquiry in the basin of the Putumayo, it was upon his word and his unimpeachable integrity of character that the Foreign Office relied. Once again his personal report was made the main weapon in the concerted attack by the American and British Governments on Peru; and once again he was exposed to a campaign of reckless vilification. His second report was not in the hands of the British Government until 1912, and it was not published until that summer.

*

That the life of such a man deserved study and was worth recording has been the thought that led to the writing of this book. I have purposely refrained from attempting to make it an official biography. It contains very few personal letters, though many have been preserved and will no doubt be published in due time. I met Roger Casement only on a few occasions, at considerable intervals, before the war. But no

one who ever saw that tall and romantic figure could ever forget him, or fail to be impressed by his transcendent sincerity and idealism.

It is curious that in the 'Trial of Roger Casement,' in the *Notable British Trials* series published by William Hodge of Edinburgh, it should be stated, even in a quite recent edition, that 'material of a personal nature relative to Casement which is available at present to a would-be biographer is very scanty.' On the contrary, the material is immense. Both his reports on the Congo and on the Putumayo inquiries, although published as official documents by the Stationery Office, are such personal records of his journeys that they might almost have been written for an autobiography. Among other Government publications, much light on his activities is thrown by the report and the evidence of the Hardinge Commission on the Dublin Rebellion in 1916, and by the 'Documents relating to the Sinn Féin movement' published in 1921.

Two small books published about him in Germany during the war were apparently produced for propagandist purposes in America, and contain very little that is of any importance. A pamphlet written by Mr. Redmond Howard, while his appeal was still pending, contains some letters and documents that are not easily accessible otherwise. But his own detailed diary of his activities in Germany was published at Munich in 1922, in English, by his friend Dr. Curry; and in April of the same year further extracts from the unpublished portions describing the preparations for his final departure from Germany were published in certain American newspapers and in the *Irish Independent*.

Concerning the rise of the Sinn Féin movement generally a considerable amount of literature has already appeared, the most interesting volumes being Darrell Figgis's *Recollections of the Irish War*, Professor Alison Phillips's *The Revolution in Ireland*, Mr. Beazley's *Life of Michael Collins*, and Mr. Bulmer Hobson's *History of the Irish Volunteers*. For part of the same period there is also much material in the diaries of Field-Marshal Sir Henry Wilson, and the memoirs of General Macready and Sir

Wyndham Childs. For the attempt to form an Irish Brigade in Germany, the chief printed source is the narrative by one of Casement's recruits, Mr. McKeogh, which was published in the *Catholic Bulletin* (Dublin) from January to December 1928; but it contains little new material and many inaccuracies.

To these and many other sources which it would take too long to name, I am indebted in some degree either for new information or for verification. To a number of Casement's friends I am especially indebted for new material which I can now publish, particularly in relation to Limburg Camp and to his last weeks in Pentonville Prison. I refrain purposely from mentioning their names, in case any of them may disagree with my presentation of Casement's character.

That he made absurd errors of judgment was admitted freely in his own diaries. The one ugly blot upon his career is that attempt to seduce the allegiance of prisoners of war. No man was ever so much at the mercy of his own conscience, or so driven to extremes by the dictation of his own standards of public duty. It led him into many strange places and reckless adventures. In every one of them he risked and lost much. His work for the tortured natives of the Congo and the Putumayo cost him his physical and mental health. He emerged from his twenty years in the consular service with a knighthood, a reputation, and a small pension. In Ireland he risked vastly more, and he lost both his life and his good name in his efforts to serve her. But a spirit such as that which inspired Roger Casement to his adventures, whether they were well or ill advised, in the service of his fellow-men, is not so common that it can be ignored or forgotten.

*

The facts of his early life may be very briefly summarised. Roger David Casement was born on 1st September 1864 at Doyle's Cottage, Sandycove, Dublin. His father, Roger Casement, a Captain in the Antrim Militia, belonged to a Protestant family long settled in Ulster. His mother, Annic Jephson, had ceased to be a practising Catholic after her

marriage, and her four children were brought up as Protestants. She and her husband both died when the children were still small, and Roger Casement was sent to his father's relatives in County Antrim, where he spent his boyhood.

He was educated at the school kept by Dr. King in Ballymena until he was in his seventeenth year. He then studied for the Civil Service under a tutor, but gave up that idea within a year, and went to Liverpool to take up employment with the Elder Dempster Shipping Company. He spent two years in Liverpool before he obtained his desire of travelling to West Africa in one of the Company's steamers.

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THE LIFE AND DEATH OF
ROGER CASEMENT

PART I

THE CONGO¹

'I can assure you that he (Roger Casement) is a limpid personality. There is a touch of the conquistador in him too; for I've seen him start off into an unspeakable wilderness swinging a crook-handled stick for all weapons, with two bulldogs, Paddy (white) and Biddy (brindle) at his heels, and a Loanda boy carrying a bundle for all company. A few months afterwards it so happened that I saw him come out again, a little leaner, a little browner, with his stick, dogs, and Loanda boy, and quietly serene as though he had been for a stroll in a park. . . . He could tell you things! Things I've tried to forget; things I never did know. He has had as many years of Africa as I had months – almost.' – JOSEPH CONRAD in a letter to R. B. Cunninghame-Graham, 26th December 1903.

THE CONGO

ON 15th November 1884 there assembled in Berlin a Conference representative of all the Powers, which was to consider the immense practical problems that had arisen from the discovery of the course of the Congo River by the British explorer Stanley. Vast natural resources and territories which were still unclaimed had been thrown open to the world by that courageous journey in which he had crossed Africa from east to west, emerging on the waters of the enormous river. From every country ambitious of commercial expansion new expeditions were being planned, while the French missionaries set the pace in penetrating unknown regions under the enterprising leadership of Cardinal Lavigerie's disciples. 'The natural development of commerce in Africa,' declared Prince Bismarck in the speech with which he opened the Conference, 'gives birth to the very legitimate desire to open up to civilisation the territories which are at present unexplored and unoccupied.' The fundamental idea of the Conference, he explained, was 'to facilitate the access of all commercial nations to the interior of Africa.'

Roger Casement, a tall, black-haired young Ulsterman in his twenty-first year, had at that time just embarked on his first voyage to West Africa, as purser in one of the Elder Dempster Company's steamers. Within his own lifetime virtually a new continent had been brought within the scope of commercial enterprise. The explorations of Burton and Speke and Grant, of Baker and Schweinfurth and Livingstone, had revealed to an astonished generation the enormous possibilities of an undeveloped continent that was nearer to England even than America. Stanley's epoch-making discovery had shown that a great navigable river provided direct access

to limitless territories far inland. Expeditions to carry further the explorations of the early pioneers were only awaiting the application of adventurous young volunteers. The great financiers, fired by the prospect of making enormous fortunes by a judicious employment of their resources, were contemplating excursions into new fields of exploitation. Governments had become alive to the urgency of asserting their claims to share in territories such as they had never dreamed of owning or controlling. A desperate race had begun to stake out claims in the remote hinterland of Central Africa which no white man had yet visited.

Returning from his first glimpses of the vast spaces and the riotously luxuriant forests of equatorial Africa, Roger Casement was consumed with a longing to go back and travel insatiably through lands that were still unexplored. To be included in an expedition of explorers became the centre of all his hopes. Stanley had become so famous that there was no possibility of being associated with him. But in one of the expeditions organised by the American General Henry Sanford to conduct further explorations on the Congo, he succeeded in obtaining a place. Sanford was a wealthy American in search of adventure and fame, and he collected a group of young men, including Parminster and E. J. Glave and Herbert Ward, to assist him in his African explorations. Stanley's pre-eminence was undisputed, but the rivalry in exploiting the possibilities that he had discovered was to engage the attention of a large number of remarkable men.

Among these, one man particularly had assumed a position of unique influence and prestige by his astute discernment of the commercial prospects in the mighty river which gave access to the heart of Africa. King Leopold II of Belgium was a monarch of most exceptional acumen and ambition, and he possessed two singular advantages. His father had been the beloved uncle of Queen Victoria – which gave him incalculable resources in political and financial backing whenever he could gain her approval – and he was king of a small country which could not be suspected of any sordid desire for national

aggrandisement. The very weakness and defencelessness of the kingdom of Belgium – which had only come into existence through the London Congress of 1830, and whose neutrality had been threatened, and preserved only by British intervention, in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870 – was a sufficient answer to any unworthy suspicions of such ambition in Leopold's mind.

As the ruler of the small nation whose neutrality was guaranteed by the great Powers of Europe, he came forward as the advocate of a noble scheme for safeguarding international free trade throughout the vast new continent that Stanley had opened up. His initiative met with a response as encouraging and as appreciative as has been shown in more recent years towards the Hague as the centre of an International Court of Justice, or Geneva as the headquarters of the League of Nations. The father of this able man of affairs had been given the throne of Belgium by the Powers before Queen Victoria had yet ascended the throne of England. His son had for years been justifying his position with exemplary dignity and enterprise, by the admirable internal administration of his own prosperous country, and still more by his unfailing efforts as the leading philanthropist of Europe.

He had acquired an enviable reputation for disinterestedness and public spirit throughout the world, and had learned from experience the difficult art of keeping in the good graces of his cousin at Windsor. She still cherished a deep affection for the affectionate uncle who had watched over her childhood with such solicitude that she had written, as a princess, in her early diary, that 'to hear dear uncle speak on any subject is like reading a highly instructive book; his conversation is so enlightened, so clear. He is universally admitted to be one of the first politicians now extant.' Lord Melbourne had been among those who had shared the young Queen's admiration for her 'dearest uncle's' abilities, and had described him warmly as 'one of the cleverest fellows I ever saw – the most discreet man, the most well-judging and most cool man.'

The son of that 'most well-judging, most cool man,' with his beard already turning grey, had seized more quickly than

any other ruler in Europe upon the possibilities presented by Stanley's momentous discovery that Central Africa was an easily accessible new continent, with a vast population capable of productive industry if they were given the necessary incentive by the introduction of trade with Europe. He had discerned the possibilities of the future, even before Stanley's dramatic success had carried them enormously further than had seemed likely from the earlier expeditions of Burton and Livingstone and Speke. Acting with characteristic energy and promptitude, he issued invitations to the various Governments to send delegates to an International Conference in Brussels in 1876 which resulted in the formation of the 'International Association for the Exploration and Civilisation of Central Africa,' with King Leopold as its distinguished President.

That bold move had given him a unique status in relation to all subsequent developments in Africa, before Stanley's magnificent feat in following the Congo from Central Africa to the sea had yet startled the civilised world. As President of the International Association which had been founded under his auspices at Brussels, King Leopold was able to get in touch with Stanley immediately after his return to Europe. The great explorer guilelessly lent his name and his personal influence and his energies to all the subsequent efforts of the Belgian king. In 1879 he went back to the Congo as the accredited agent of the Association, and again in 1882, to arrange treaties with local chiefs and to establish trading centres, while the organisation of commercial companies in Europe proceeded with feverish activity. Before long the national rivalry of the British expeditions led by Stanley, and of the French under de Brazza, had made the arrangement of definite treaties for the future a matter of urgency. In 1884 the conclusion of a separate treaty between England and Portugal guaranteed to Portugal the possession of both sides of the mouth of the River Congo, on terms that prescribed a moderate rate of tariff upon trade up the river, and a strict equality of trading rights for all nations.

It was a masterly stroke on King Leopold's part to

secure, at this critical stage of the developments, the services and goodwill of the American General Sanford as well as of Stanley, who had come to regard him as the most generous promoter of exploration with philanthropic objects. Sanford had organised an expedition with the patriotic desire of showing that America was not behind other countries in enterprise. And after its conclusion he reported to the American Government in such enthusiastic terms about the territories which had been ceded to the Association 'for the use and benefit of free states established and being established' that the United States expressed its approval.

The constitution of an Independent Congo State, which was formally described at the Berlin Conference of 1885 as 'having been founded by His Majesty the King of the Belgians for the purpose of promoting the civilisation and commerce of Africa, and for other humane and benevolent purposes' was accordingly accepted. The Independent State of the Congo as the offspring of King Leopold's Association thus came into being with the formal sanction of the Powers. King Leopold became its President and trustee, exercising a jurisdiction over a million square miles of territory in Central Africa, with a population of some twenty million natives.

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Such was the situation when Roger Casement, at the age of twenty-three, succeeded in obtaining his inclusion in one of General Sanford's expeditions. Barely two years had passed since the Independent State of the Congo had received international recognition, with King Leopold as its sovereign ruler, untrammelled even by the constitutional restrictions of his position as monarch in his own country. Exploration was still in its beginnings, and the trading posts had not yet pushed far inland from the first fields of their operations. Fabulous wealth was still awaiting the enterprise of anyone who was prepared to organise trading expeditions to collect ivory and rubber from the willing native populations. They would accept payment with clamorous enthusiasm in glass beads or shoddy cloth or

any gaudy articles of ornament or apparel the European traders could bring to offer them in exchange.

Beyond the main stream of the river, even down its more important tributaries, the very appearance of white men was still unknown. Roger Casement, returning after a long interval to the scenes of his early explorations, could afterwards recall how the natives had still 'lived their own savage lives in anarchic and disorderly communities, uncontrolled by Europeans,' when he had first seen them and received the friendly welcome of an unsuspecting primitive people. He had travelled many hundreds of miles inland in those brief years of youthful, eager impressions. He had seen the natives leading their own simple communal existence, as they had lived for hundreds upon hundreds of years among the immense tropical forests and the wide-stretching lakes with their surrounding swamps. He had seen the arrival of the first traders among them, and the joy with which they had been received.

He had seen white men grow rich beyond their wildest dreams within a few years by barter with these simple savages, so willing to bring in cargoes of ivory and of rubber in exchange for tawdry rubbish from the cheapest jewellery or clothing factories in Europe. He had seen many of them stricken down by fever who had never returned home. Others had been devoured by leopards or crocodiles. And some, who had succumbed to the fierce heat and the relaxation of a tropical climate, had slunk away into the forests to live the idle, monotonous life of the natives.

He came back to England and crossed the Atlantic to the United States, on a lecturing tour to make known to delighted American audiences the wonders that Sanford's pioneering expedition had revealed for the benefit of the white peoples and for the uplifting of the Africans themselves. And when he returned to the Congo again in 1891, fascinated more than ever by the vast luxuriance and silence of the forests and the limitless sweep of the mighty river itself, he found new conditions established by a further treaty and new developments taking shape with startling rapidity.

Five years of the Independent State of the Congo had wrought

strange changes, and the natives in remote places, many hundreds of miles inland from the sea, were becoming disquietingly aware of an interruption of their old ways of life. In the past their one terror had been the slave traders and the incursions of cannibalistic tribes. But King Leopold had determined to exterminate the slave trade, and to do that involved the organisation of an always increasing force of soldiery.

Even in the year before Roger Casement sailed for America to report upon the progress of Sanford's expeditions, the soldiery already included more than two thousand 'regulars,' while plans were being actively completed for the enrolment of fully ten thousand more as a militia. By the time he returned, King Leopold had succeeded in obtaining international sanction, on the pretext of suppressing the slave trade by the Arabs of the Congo, for the enrolment of an almost unlimited force of native troops throughout the immense extent of the State. He had obtained sanction also for levying an immense revenue, by taxes and other compulsory dues, upon the native populations, to defray the cost of a militarised administration.

To those who knew what was actually happening on the Congo, the request by King Leopold for powers to raise more native troops was ominous. But the reputation of the old King of the Belgians as a philanthropic pioneer was still unshadowed by the smallest cloud of suspicion. His insistence upon the necessity of abolishing the slave trade, and the barbarities committed by the Arab slave traders on the borders of the Congo State, had been received as further evidence of his zeal as the regenerator of Central Africa. Roger Casement himself had been absent for a protracted tour of America, and for a much-needed holiday at his own home in the quiet glens of County Antrim. When he resumed his vagrant career as a pioneer in Central Africa, he was to find his next occupation a thousand miles north of the Congo River. By now he was well known as an African explorer, and the British Colonial Office appointed him as its Travelling Commissioner in the Nigerian Protectorate.

So, by devious routes he had indeed entered the Civil Service – which had seemed so dismal and unpromising a career as he had contemplated it while reading reluctantly for an examination after he had left school, and which he had deliberately avoided when he went to Liverpool to enter the Elder Dempster Shipping Company instead. In Nigeria, travelling as a sort of Intelligence Officer for the British Government, which was still groping to find a policy for the development of its protectorate, he found paradoxically, as a Civil Servant, all the scope that he had ever desired for exploration and for studying strange peoples and strange lands. He found more as well; for at the age of twenty-eight he was already being entrusted with responsibilities which must affect the whole policy of the British Government towards the native peoples.

The High Commissioner of the Protectorate during the three years of his work in Nigeria was Sir Claude Macdonald, who was afterwards to become British Ambassador in Tokio. In his official report upon the period of his own administration as High Commissioner, Macdonald was to pay tribute to young Mr. Casement's wide experience among the natives, and to state his emphatic opinion that 'it would be difficult to find anyone in every way more suited' for his duties as Travelling Commissioner.

Three years of such experience in Nigeria had established Casement's reputation as one of the ablest and most promising young men in the British Colonial service in Africa; and in 1895, being then in his thirty-second year, he was promoted and transferred to the other side of the continent, to a climate where the heat at least was less fierce, but still almost tropical, as Her Majesty's Consul at Lourenço Marquez, the seaport of Portuguese East Africa on Delagoa Bay. There, on the northern edge of Natal, and close to the eastern borders of the Transvaal and of Swaziland, he was to spend the following three years until in the summer of 1898 he was transferred across Africa again.

He became Her Majesty's Consul for the Portuguese possessions in West Africa, which stretched from the mouth of

the Congo for nearly a thousand miles southwards, and for seven or eight hundred miles inland. He had scarcely returned to the country which had so captivated him in his youth, and which was to be so intimately associated with his own name in later years, when the Boer War broke out. His intimate knowledge of the borderland of the Transvaal and of Swaziland and of Natal, which he had acquired as Consul in Delagoa Bay, made him indispensable at Capetown, and for two years he was to be seconded for special service there during the war. He received the Queen's South African Medal before he was released again from the irksome conditions of town life and office routine.

He was then sent into the Independent State of the Congo itself, as Consul at Kinchassa, a few hundred miles upstream from the mouth of the enormous river. Yet another promotion followed next year, when in August 1901 he was sent across the river as Consul for part of the French Congo Colony on the northern bank, in territory that spread across the Equator.

Great changes and developments had been taking place in the fifteen years since he had arrived on his first journey as an explorer in the Congo territory, little more than a boy, in Sanford's expedition. Trading posts had been pushed far inland, as well as along both banks, and in the immense French and Portuguese territories to north and south. Scarcely any man living had had his own varied experience of the whole Congo basin, or had seen much of its rapid development from so many sides. Throughout Central Africa he was well known as a gallant pioneer of Stanley's heroic era; and no man had more friends or was more respected for his superb courage and wide experience. 'Always ready to help, condemning cruelty and injustice in any form,' is the description given of him by Dr. Fred Puleston, who speaks of him as his 'dearest friend.' And Dr. Puleston's recent book, *African Drums*, reveals himself as a hardened African trader, anything but a sentimentalist towards either the natives or his own friends.

Wherever he had been, especially in the past two years since he had returned from Capetown, he had met with an over-

whelming accumulation of alarming evidence concerning the ruthless exploitation and enslavement of the natives under King Leopold's personal rule in the Independent State. Trade was his special responsibility as Her Majesty's Consul, and day after day he was confronted with unending complaints of restrictions imposed upon that 'absolute freedom of commerce for every nation,' which had been the first principle of the constitution that Leopold himself had put forward as the means of securing control. The 'Free State,' of which he had been appointed as the custodian and the trustee had, in fact, been becoming more and more shamelessly a personal monopoly from which King Leopold was deriving enormous revenues.

He was collecting excessive dues upon transport, imposing arbitrary and crushing taxation upon the natives. Above all, he was leasing concessions to commercial companies, which proceeded to compel the native tribes to work rubber for their benefit without any pretence at fair remuneration and under conditions worse than systematised slavery. Every one in the Congo region was aware that the sole concern of the Concession Companies, and of the illustrious monarch whose prestige cloaked their depredations, was to exploit territory after territory to the utmost without regard either to the exhaustion of its natural resources, or to the fate of the natives whom they made their slaves.

It was the treatment of natives especially that filled Casement's soul with revolt, and directed his attention to the urgency of demanding intervention by the Powers which had entrusted King Leopold with the vast authority he was abusing. Week after week Casement found it necessary to investigate vehement complaints, and to dispatch detailed reports to the Foreign Office in London concerning flagrant instances of abuse. It was no wonder that the authorities in Whitehall began to pay attention to the astounding stories which he was placing so frequently before them.

Even at home there had arisen a growing campaign of indignation among those who had experience of conditions in the Congo basin. The formidable and tireless energies of Sir Charles Dilke in the House of Commons had been enlisted by

the Aborigines Protection Society for several years on behalf of the Congo natives. His persistent interventions had aroused public opinion to a feeling of uneasiness which was fostered by the passionate eloquence of Mr. E. D. Morel, who had devoted himself to collecting evidence from missionaries and traders and others who were in a position to make known the truth. By the time Roger Casement assumed his consular duties in the Congo, no less than fifteen Chambers of Commerce in England had joined in an indignant protest to the Foreign Office against the restrictions being imposed upon British trade.

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Casement's appointment to the Congo had been largely the result of this preliminary agitation, for his reputation both as an expert on West African conditions, and as a man of great personal courage and enterprise already stood very high. He had shown a remarkable capacity for making friends, and for inspiring confidence in his own ideas. The lanky, curly-haired boy who had left Liverpool to take part in Sanford's explorations had grown into a tall, powerfully built man, with a pointed black beard which gave him a most unusual and picturesque appearance.

'A man almost worshipped by his friends, possessed of a personality inspiring respect and admiration, absolutely honest, absolutely fearless; saturated with Africa, the greatness, the grandeur of its wide expanse, the virgin depths of its vast forests, the natural kindness and hospitality of its peoples' – such was E. D. Morel's description of him about this time. And another friend, writing at the same period, describes him as 'a high-minded man, against whom there has never been a breath of any sort of scandal. To me, he has always represented what is meant by the words honour and courage. I have known him twenty-one years (five years of our friendship being spent together in Africa), and I cannot imagine a finer specimen of a man. He invariably wins the heart and confidence of all he meets. He is absolutely honourable and without fear.'

His critics said with great emphasis in the following years that he was a sentimentalist who would accept as true any sort

of pitiful story that was told to him by a native. But the Foreign Office had long experience of his meticulous care in verifying facts. The stories that he reported to London were of a kind that no one would believe unless he was certain that they were true. It could not be said that he was merely criticising the internal administration of another State; it was the rights and liberties of British subjects and British traders that were involved in all his complaints.

There had been that amazing story, for instance, of a certain coloured British subject from Lagos who had appealed to him, as the British Consul, for his assistance. He, with three Europeans, all of them in the service of one of the Concession Companies, the *Compagnie Anversoise de Commerce au Congo*, had been charged with various acts of cruelty and oppression which had caused much loss of life to the natives in the Mongala region. 'These men,' Casement had reported, 'had been arrested by the authorities in the summer of 1900, and had been sentenced to long terms of imprisonment, against which they had made appeal. The facts charged against the British coloured subject (who sought my help) were, among others, that he had illegally arrested women and kept them in illegal detention at his trading station, and it was alleged that many of these women had died of starvation while thus confined. This man himself, when I had visited him in Boma jail in March 1901, said that more than one hundred women and children had died of starvation at his hands, but that the responsibility for both their arrest and his own lack of food to give them was due to his superiors' orders and neglect.

'The Court of Appeal at Boma gave final judgment in the case on 13th February 1901; and in connection with the Lagos man's degree of guilt, a copy of this judgment, in so far as it affected him, at my request had been communicated to me by the Governor-General. From this judgment I learned that the case against the accused had been clearly proved. Among other extenuating circumstances, which secured, however, a marked reduction of the first sentence imposed on the coloured man, the Court of Appeal cited the following: -

“That it is just to take into account that, by the correspondence produced in the case, the chiefs of the Concession Company have, if not by formal orders, at least by their example and their tolerance, induced their agents to take no account whatever of the rights, property, and lives of the natives; to use the arms and the soldiers which should have served for their defence and the maintenance of order, to force the natives to furnish them with produce and to work for the Company, as also to pursue as rebels and outlaws those who sought to escape from the requisitions imposed upon them. . . . That, above all, the fact that the arrest of women and their detention, to compel the villages to furnish both produce and workmen, was tolerated and admitted even by certain of the administrative authorities of the region.”

Other cases revealing barbarous conditions had been reported upon so frequently, and the volume of public opinion against King Leopold in England was rising so high, that in August 1902 a dispatch was sent by Lord Lansdowne, as Foreign Minister, to the Belgian Government. It insisted strongly that natives ought to be treated with humanity and gradually led into the paths of civilisation, and that freedom of trade in the Congo basin ought to be completely unrestricted. The dispatch further alluded to the widespread impression that the administration of the Congo State had involved systematic ‘cruelty and oppression.’ The Belgian Government replied a few weeks later with a long memorandum, which concluded with the following sarcastic passages: –

‘The Government of the Congo State, after careful examination of the English Note, remain convinced that, in view of its vagueness and the complete lack of evidence, which is implicitly admitted, there is no tribunal in the world, supposing there were one possessing competent jurisdiction, which could, far from pronouncing a condemnation, take any decision other than to refuse action on mere supposition.

‘If the Congo State is attacked, England may admit that she, more than any other nation, has been the object of attacks and accusations of every kind, and the list would be long of the

whelming accumulation of alarming evidence concerning the ruthless exploitation and enslavement of the natives under King Leopold's personal rule in the Independent State. Trade was his special responsibility as Her Majesty's Consul, and day after day he was confronted with unending complaints of restrictions imposed upon that 'absolute freedom of commerce for every nation,' which had been the first principle of the constitution that Leopold himself had put forward as the means of securing control. The 'Free State,' of which he had been appointed as the custodian and the trustee had, in fact, been becoming more and more shamelessly a personal monopoly from which King Leopold was deriving enormous revenues.

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campaigns which have, at various times, and even quite recently, been directed against her colonial administration. She has certainly not escaped criticism in regard to her numerous and bloody wars against native populations, nor the reproach of oppressing natives and invading their liberty. Has she not been blamed in regard to the long insurrections in Sierra Leone; to the disturbed state of Nigeria, where quite recently, according to the English newspapers, military measures of repression cost, on one single occasion, the lives of seven hundred natives, of most of their chiefs, and of the Sultan; and to the conflict in Somaliland, which is being carried on at the cost of many lives, without, however, exciting expressions of regret in the House of Commons, except on the score of the heavy expense?

'Seeing that these attacks have left England indifferent, it is somewhat surprising to find her now attaching such importance to those made on the Congo State.

'There is, however, reason to think that the natives of the Congo State prefer the Government of a small and pacific nation, whose aims remain as peaceful as its creation, which was founded on Treaties concluded with the natives.'

Before sending his own dispatch to Brussels, however, Lord Lansdowne had decided that the Foreign Office must no longer be exposed to the charge of relying upon insufficient and unofficial evidence. Roger Casement accordingly received urgent instructions to undertake a personal survey of the conditions existing in the Congo basin, and to report in detail at the earliest possible moment. The rejoinder to that sarcastic message from Brussels was to wait until his investigation had been completed and his report was available in Whitehall. But before the insulting message from Brussels had even been dispatched, Roger Casement had, in fact, completed his mission, and was already on his way home from Leopoldville.

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In the first week of June 1903 Roger Casement set out on his official tour of investigation, arriving on the 6th at Leopoldville. He had little enough time at his disposal; and he knew well,

from long experience, that word of his movements would be sent ahead from place to place. It would require great ingenuity to arrive anywhere without warning having been given in time to remove all obvious traces of outrage.

Even at the outset his plans were frustrated by the failure of the steamship company to provide him with accommodation which would give a reasonable chance of avoiding fever and intolerable fatigue. For a whole month he was obliged to stay in the neighbourhood of Stanley Pool before he could set out for the Upper Congo: and the interval had given ample time for hiding what it was undesirable that he should see. But by the 15th September he was back again at Leopoldville, having been only two and a half months in all on the upper river.

Few official journeys have ever resulted in the compilation of such a mass of carefully tested evidence. He was single-handed, and at times unable even to obtain labourers to assist his journey. But he managed within that brief space to visit several points of the Congo River itself up to the junction of the Lulonga River. He had explored it, as well as its principal feeder, the Lopori, as far as Bongandanga, from where he went round Lake Mantumba. Only a man of extraordinary energy and endurance could have persisted day after day in the cross-examination of crowds of witnesses who flocked to place their stories before him. And even his long and varied experience of conditions in tropical Africa would have been much less valuable, had it not been that he was actually going over ground which he had visited fifteen years before, in his first wanderings as a restless young Irishman through the heart of Africa.

Scarcely anyone else could have reported on the comparison between present and former conditions; and he noted the immense change with close attention to detail, and with remarkable impartiality. More than a decade of 'very energetic intervention,' he reported to Lord Lansdowne, had been active in the interval since he had seen the same districts before. That such intervention was urgently needed was undeniable to anyone who knew the Upper Congo as he himself remembered it. He acknowledged with full emphasis at the outset of his

report that 'there are to-day widespread proofs of the great energy displayed by Belgian officials in introducing their methods of rule over one of the most savage regions of Africa.'

Admirably built and admirably kept stations, he now found, greeted the traveller at many points, and a fleet of nearly fifty river steamers, the property of the Congo Government, maintained a regular system of navigation on the main river and its principal tributaries. By them the most inaccessible parts of Central Africa had been opened up; and besides a railway, 'excellently constructed in view of the difficulties to be encountered,' now connected the ocean ports with Stanley Pool over a tract of country which formerly could only be travelled on foot with many days of great bodily fatigue. 'To-day,' he reported, 'the railway works most efficiently.' He noticed even in the two years since his last visit to Stanley Pool, many improvements both in the permanent way and in the general management of the railway. The achievement was the more remarkable inasmuch as it had to traverse the cataract region, some two hundred miles in breadth, which was not only unproductive, but was the place of origin of the sleeping sickness – which in modern times had been carried right across Africa to the Indian Ocean, with devastating results.

So much for the mechanical improvements of European civilisation. But a much more striking change had chiefly transformed the whole region within ten years. Side by side with this unmistakable evidence of systematic and well-organised administration, he found everywhere such a sudden shrinkage of the native population that the country was becoming almost an uninhabited wilderness.

He had been prepared, by all that he had heard, to expect such signs of rapidly disappearing life. But the facts, even at his first impression, had been enormously more striking than he had foreseen. Communities which he could remember as large and flourishing centres of population he now found had entirely disappeared, or were so diminished as to be no longer recognisable. On the southern shores of Stanley Pool, for instance, the three towns of Ngaliema (since transformed into

Leopoldville) and Kinchasa and Ndolo, situated within a few miles of each other, had formerly contained at least some five thousand Batekes. Almost the whole population had, he discovered, vanished literally in one night. That had been twelve years ago, when the entire people had decided to abandon their homes, and one evening had crossed *en masse* over to the French territory on the northern bank.

Even in Leopoldville there were now at most about a hundred of the original natives or their descendants. At Kinchasa, a bare handful were still to be found, living around one of the European trading depots. At Ndolo not one remained; what had been a town was to-day no more than a Government post planted close to the station of the Congo Railway Company. And even Leopoldville itself, the headquarters of the Government, which had been given the name of its illustrious ruler, was in fact a barrack rather than a town; a well-planned Government station, with solidly built houses for about a hundred European residents, and long rows of mud-built huts for the three thousand native workmen they employed. The old native trade that Casement could remember had completely disappeared; and there was now nothing apart from the concentration of energy upon rubber.

Even the food supplies of the native working population in Leopoldville itself had become precarious. It was provided by forced requisitioning among the natives of the surrounding districts; and as their numbers continually dwindled through sleeping sickness and other causes, the burden upon the always diminishing remnant became more and more difficult to bear. The food required for them was only of the simplest kind – a preparation of the root of the cassava plant, steeped and boiled and made up into loaves or puddings of varying weight. Each week a fixed quota of these cassava loaves had to be brought in to supply the Government workmen who had replaced the old native population; and the problem of keeping up the supply, in spite of a most rigorous system of punishments for failure to produce what was required, was already becoming a menace to the future of the Government station. How the supplies

were actually collected, and the effect of these exactions upon the natives, were questions that the authorities had no time to consider, and that promised an interesting subject for investigation by the British Consul.

The matter was obviously of great importance. Leopoldville was the headquarters of the Government's steamship service, without which the whole access to the Upper Congo must become impossible. Much labour and much money had been sunk in the creation of the Government's workshop for repairing and fitting the steamship service. Care, order, activity, even brightness, were the impressions that it left upon Roger Casement as he visited it, and he made full notes concerning its admirable display of industry and organisation. Its stores were no less admirable in their construction and in their upkeep. From the wharf he could watch the cargoes of the Government and the Concession Companies being transhipped direct on to the railway trucks alongside, which carried them down the river to Matadi to be shipped straight to Europe.

It was a marvellous scene of economic development, in a region where fifteen years before no steamship had yet penetrated. The Government had good reason to feel that its industry had been rewarded. The steamship service had produced a handsome dividend, and the Government was very strict in enforcing its own monopoly as a carrying agent. Not even passengers could be carried over the mighty river outside the limits of each Concession, except upon payment of the Government's scale of charges. Should the Concession Companies be obliged by imperative need to carry either their own produce or their own people down to Leopoldville in their own ships, they must pay none the less the entire Government charges, as though the Government ships had carried them.

Nor were the shipping facilities adequate for the rapid increase in the demands made upon them. Even the British Consul on his tour of inspection had found that he could not secure accommodation on the large steamer in which he had intended to make his journey. The bookings of passages were far in excess of the statutory complement to be carried, and when

the *Flandre* started upstream at its scheduled time it had twenty Europeans on board who would have to sleep on deck; and the official status of His Majesty's Consul on a tour of investigation could not admit of his being added to their number.

The Société Anonyme Belge du Haut-Congo then invited him to travel as its guest on one of its own steamers. Even so, a special licence for him to travel as a guest had to be obtained, and his fare had to be paid by the Company to the Government as though he had been travelling on one of their own overcrowded steamers. Clearly there was profit to be made from transport conducted under such conditions – all the more when the taxes levied upon the crews and for permission to cut firewood within the limited areas prescribed were collected. Even the officially published accounts of the Government steamship lines showed a revenue of more than three million francs during the year against an expenditure reckoned at two millions.

Who could complain? It was entirely due to the Government's enterprise that any steamships were there. Was there not also the admirably kept hospital for Europeans, where every white man in the Congo was certain to need attendance sooner or later during his brief existence by the Equator? Was there not the devoted and exemplary work of that other European doctor, resident in the Government station, whose bacteriological studies were, in the words of the British Consul himself, 'unremitting and worthy of much praise'?

There was even a hospital for the natives. Concerning that, though he was careful to lay the blame elsewhere than upon the local medical staff, Roger Casement was less enthusiastic, when he visited it several times during the unexpected delay at Leopoldville. 'When I visited the three mud huts which serve this purpose, all of them dilapidated, and two with the thatched roofs almost gone, I found seventeen sleeping sickness patients, male and female, lying about in the utmost dirt,' he wrote in his report to Lord Lansdowne. 'Most of them were lying on the bare ground – several out on the pathway in front of the houses, and one, a woman, had fallen into the fire just prior

to my arrival (while in the final, insensible stage of the disease) and had burned herself very badly. She had since been well bandaged, but was still lying out on the ground with her head almost in the fire, and while I sought to speak to her, in turning she upset a pot of scalding water over her shoulder. All of the seventeen persons I saw were near their end, and on my second visit, two days later, the 19th June, I found one of them lying dead out in the open.'

The evidence of Leopoldville must have been ominous even to one who had not known the contented communities of native villagers which had disappeared within fifteen years. It had been easy to picture them turned into colonies of forced labourers for the rubber companies, selling their work as best they could in a country where no European currency had ever been heard of, and accepting payment in brass rods of uncertain length. That they would have to supply food as a tax in return for the benefits of western civilisation was only to be expected. But the problem had become vastly complicated by the simultaneous growth of the Government settlement and the disappearance of the native populations.

With more food needed from month to month, yet always fewer natives to bring in the food, how far could the twenty-four hours of every day be stretched to provide time for keeping the employees of the Government as well as for themselves? Was there anyone in authority in all the higher administration of that vast area who would look ahead? The native hospital at Leopoldville scarcely suggested that there was much consideration for the natives. Was there anyone who had vision enough to realise that they must at least be kept from dying out?

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The journey up river threw further light upon the problem before Casement made his first halt after steaming some one hundred and sixty miles. There had been a chain of villages with nearly five thousand people along the river when he had made the same journey sixteen years before. Now barely five hundred remained. Every one of the old villages was entirely deserted. Even the sites could scarcely be discerned among the

creepers and brushwood of the forest that had grown over them. Not even a Government station was there now, but its telegraph line connecting Leopoldville with Coquilhatville, passing close to the river-bank, ran through the line of the former villages. The people of the riverside settlements, and from twenty miles inland, were obliged to keep the telegraph line free from undergrowth, so that in many places it now provided a useful path. To keep the path clear was no light matter, but the Government required it as a labour tax.

For fully a year, it appeared, no payment whatever had been made for this labour, although it involved protracted absence from their homes, and great difficulty in providing themselves with food. Their grievance was not lessened by the contrast with conditions at the neighbouring woodcutting post, where the woodcutters, although compelled to serve and sometimes irregularly detained, were at least paid for their services. The woodcutters indeed were, by comparison, singularly blessed. They might complain of being detained and forced to labour for the Government, but they were not only paid, but fed. And the duty of feeding them was one more imposition upon the group of some two hundred and forty luckless villagers who not only had to keep the telegraph line clear without receiving wages, but had to provide, cook, and carry the food for the woodcutters at the next settlement.

For the food they were paid something – one small brass rod for each ‘kwanga’ or boiled cassava pudding, or a total of less than nineteen francs between all the conscripted villages, for finding and cooking and carrying close on a ton of puddings every week. The labour was not lightened by the knowledge that the woodcutters did not require nearly so much and sold the surplus to the crews of passing steamers. What did it matter to them that one village, containing only ten persons all told, with only three women who were even capable of preparing the kwanga loaves, was under compulsion to provide for their voracious appetites each week?

They had grown so weary and desperate that it was without hope of redress they told their story to the tall, black-bearded Irishman, who had come among them followed by his bulldog.

They asked him, how could they be expected to plant and weed their own gardens, when they had to spend their days in collecting and preparing the cassava, making it into portable shape, and then carry it nearly a day's journey every week to the woodcutting post? Worst of all was the terror of delivering it, knowing that they would be beaten mercilessly if the kwanga were too small or badly cooked, and probably detained for several days to cut firewood as a punishment.

Even their meagre pay had become a mockery. The rods of brass wire were now less than half the former size, yet complaints inevitably resulted in reprisals and forced detention. Was there no hope of redress? Was there no possibility of appeal, they begged of him, against the Government above all? It not only had cut down the length of the brass rods, but exacted five or six times as much prepared food – involving a compulsory delivery at considerable distances – as would earn the same payment in a public market.

Ugly and brutal though such a system was, the conditions that had existed formerly had been far from admirable. Forced labour was at least some degrees less barbarous than the open selling of slaves which had prevailed before and which Casement himself had witnessed. Nor were misery and oppression the only causes of depopulation. Many thousands had emigrated; many thousands more had been exterminated by sleeping sickness. Yet even so, the loss of much else was too evidently depriving the people of the will to live.

The convoys of large native canoes with their slave cargoes had disappeared completely from the river; but slaves had not been the only form of trade in the Upper Congo when Casement had seen it in its primitive simplicity. The whole ivory trade had gone. Not even fish was now bought or sold, where the people were compelled to toil unceasingly, under the double necessity of providing for the Government and for themselves. There was no time for either trading or hunting.

At Bolobo, where Casement made his second halt, he found that a people, formerly famous both as traders and as huntsmen, were now without canoes, and had even ceased to hunt the

hippopotami. There, too, there had been a fearful shrinkage in the population as well as a complete decay. 'It is hard to say how the people now live or how they occupy their time,' he wrote. Here also much of their time was now mortgaged to supplying forced levies of food for the Government workmen, or to woodcutting or canoe paddling for the Government station.

Half a generation before, with some forty thousand people in the district, mostly of the Bobangi tribe, the labour could have been found easily enough. But four-fifths of the old population had vanished, and the burden weighed with increasing heaviness upon the remnant, who were now counted as slaves. Even they could have become accustomed to the regular demands for gathering food and performing useful services. It was the irregular, suddenly recurring demands upon their energies and upon their freedom that had broken their spirit.

There was no end to these unexpected and devastating intrusions. The journey of some local official would entail the forced labour of a group of natives to accompany him, under penalty of imprisonment and flogging. The weeding of a Government plantation or a kitchen garden would be imposed as a duty by the sudden arrival of an armed soldier, who would demand, in the Government's name, that the women should leave their homes and tramp off with their babies on their backs and hoes in their hands, to work elsewhere without reward. Still more exasperating was the folly of the new wooden pier at the Government's beach. So much timber had been cut down already that the new supplies had to be found and cut miles away, and carried by hand-labour all the way. Some two thousand trees and saplings had been brought in and used for the pier's construction; but what tried them most sorely was the conviction that the work was being planned and executed so badly that the first annual rise of the river would sweep all the timbers away, and their labour would be wasted.

Next year, when they would be required to begin again the

same labour of Sisyphus, the timber would have to be fetched from still farther inland, the task would make still greater inroads on the little time left to them for living their own lives. Next year, too, the supplies of cassava would also be still harder to maintain. Already the shortage was so acute that in one village the people frequently had to buy the plant in its raw state for double the price that they received after cooking it and carrying it to the Government post. Food shortage was already causing disease, and disease spread unchecked among a proud people whose energies were so overtaxed that they had grown supine and listless from despair. But floggings and imprisonment were the certain punishment for failure to perform extortionate forced labour, and still more, for those who attempted to escape.

This wholesale decay of all human life was on the very highway from the Congo State to the ports of all the world. Where a fleet of fifty river steamers passed continually to and fro, and where the whole tide of European energy was sweeping in, Roger Casement could find only death and extermination on every side. If the rubber trade were carrying such devastation along the last stage of its triumphal progress to Europe, what sort of wreckage must it be causing in the pathless regions far inland? There had been stories enough of horrors and brutalities perpetrated in those remoter depths of Central Africa. It looked, indeed, as though there would be no lack of confirmation for the general indictment.

But could it be expected that the native would dare to speak? Every trace of obvious brutality had been hidden before the investigator could arrive. What was their evidence worth if he could not report what he had seen with his own eyes?

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Chance favoured him while he was waiting at Bolobo, and he made his decision instantly to lose no time. A large immigration, he learned, had taken place not long ago, of refugees from the 'Domaine de la Couronne.' They were in a settlement within twenty-five miles of an adjacent post. Starting

at once across country, he reached the place within three days, and succeeded in visiting two large villages where half the population now consisted of refugees from King Leopold's own domain. Old and young, men and women and children, they had escaped by flight from their homes four years before, to find refuge with a friendly tribe. Covering nearly one hundred and fifty miles on foot within a week, they had voluntarily accepted a condition of 'mild servitude' among their friends rather than remain in their own country where the rubber trade had turned their lives to unendurable misery.

Here at least were witnesses who could be examined freely, on a surprise visit, and Casement spent long hours in taking down their statements. He found them so incredible that he could not accept their truth. Yet some weeks later, when he encountered other refugees from the same tribe who had escaped to another district, he received complete corroboration of all that he had refused to believe.

It was a typical town among the tropical forests that screened its hundred and fifty mud houses from the scorching sun. Industrious, simple folk he found them; many of them weaving palm fibre into mats or native cloth; others had smithies working brass wire into bracelets, chains, and anklets; while their iron-workers were making knives. Casement stooped to enter one of the blacksmiths' sheds, and the five men who were busy inside ceased working and came to talk to him and his interpreter. The sheds held many people in their narrow space. Casement counted ten women, six grown-up men, and eight lads or girls in the shed as he sat down to talk with them, while his bulldog settled himself at his feet and dozed in the stifling hot air.

Why had they left their homes? he asked. Three men came to sit in front of him, wondering curiously who their visitor could be. He had his note-book in his hand, and as he noted down names and places he won their confidence, and gradually they let him know everything they had to tell. Why had they abandoned their own country, and given up all their property, to live as no better than servants among a tribe so far away?

he asked. The answer came suddenly in a chorus from every one in the shed, all clamouring at once – it was the rubber-tax levied by the Government posts. Then a blacksmith, who had been hammering out an iron neck-collar, spoke first. Every village in their country, he said – and Casement carefully wrote down each name while they watched him anxiously – had had to carry in twenty loads of rubber four times every month. How much were they paid for it? asked Casement. And again the whole audience clamoured together: ‘We got nothing! We got no pay!’

Then the same spokesman continued: ‘Our village got cloth and a little salt, but not the people who did the work. Our chiefs ate up the cloth; the workers got nothing. The pay was a fathom of cloth and a little salt for every big basketful, but it was given to the chief, never to the men. It used to take ten days to get the twenty baskets of rubber – we were always in the forest, and then when we were late we were killed. We had to go farther and farther into the forest to find the rubber vines, to go without food, and our women had to give up cultivating the fields and gardens. Then we starved. Wild beasts – the leopards – killed some of us when we were working away in the forest, and others got lost or died from exposure and starvation, and we begged the white man to leave us alone, saying we could get no more rubber, but the white men and their soldiers said: “Go! You are only beasts yourselves, you are ‘nyama’ (meat).”

‘We tried, always going farther into the forest, and when we failed and our rubber was short, the soldiers came to our towns and killed us. Many were shot, some had their ears cut off; others were tied up with ropes around their necks and bodies and taken away. The white men sometimes at the posts did not know of the bad things the soldiers did to us, but it was the white men who sent the soldiers to punish us for not bringing in enough rubber.’

Another of the natives broke in to continue: ‘We said to the white men, “We are not enough people now to do what you want us. Our country had not many people in it and we are

dying fast. We are killed by the work you make us do, by the stoppage of our plantations, and the breaking up of our homes." The white man looked at us and said: "There are lots of people in Mputu" (Europe, the white man's country). "If there are lots of people in the white man's country there must be many people in the black man's country." The white man who said this was the chief white man at F F, his name was A B, he was a very bad man. Other white men of Bula Matadi* who had been bad and wicked were B C, C D, and D E. These had killed us often, and killed us by their own hands as well as by their soldiers. Some white men were good.'

These more considerate white men had told them to stay in their homes, and did not hunt and chase them as the others had done. But after what they had suffered, they did not trust anyone's word, and they had fled from their country and were now going to stay here, far from their homes, in this country where there was no rubber. For three full seasons they had endured their torments, and it was now four seasons since they had fled. It had taken six days of quick marching, but they had fled because they could not endure the things done to them. Their chiefs were hanged, and they were killed and starved and worked beyond endurance to get rubber.

Incredulously Casement persisted in arguing with them that such things must have been done without the white man's knowledge by the black soldiers. But his insistence only provoked the most appalling answer he had yet received: -

"The white men told their soldiers: "You kill only women; you cannot kill men. You must prove that you kill men,"' the blacksmith told him. 'So then the soldiers when they killed us' (here he stopped and hesitated, and then, pointing to the private parts of the bulldog that was lying asleep at Casement's feet, he said), 'then they cut off those things and took them to the white men, who said, "It is true, you have killed men."'

'You mean to tell me that any white man ordered your bodies to be mutilated like that, and those parts of you carried

The native name for the Congo Government.

to him?" Casement asked in horrified astonishment. And they all shouted at once: 'Yes! many white men. D E did it.'

'You say this is true? Were many of you so treated after being shot?'

All (shouting out): 'Nkoto! Nkoto!' (Very many! Very many!)

The story defied belief. Yet who could pretend that these people were inventing what they told? 'Their vehemence, their flashing eyes, their excitement, were not simulated,' Casement wrote that evening in his report. 'Doubtless they exaggerated the numbers, but they were clearly telling what they knew and loathed.' He was told that they often became so furious at the recollection of what had been done to them that they lost control over themselves. One of the men, he noted, was already bordering on that state as the story was told again.

Casement, questioning them further, inquired whether the people were still escaping from their country. 'They cannot run away now,' was the immediate answer, '— not easily. There are sentries in the country there between the lake and this. Besides, there are few people left.' And then the story burst out again in a torrent of execration. 'We heard that letters came to the white men to say that the people were to be well treated. We heard that these letters had been sent by the big white men in Mputu (Europe); but our white men tore up these letters, laughing, saying: "We are the 'basango' and 'banyanga' (fathers and mothers, *i.e.* elders). Those who write to us are only 'bana' (children)." Since we left our homes the white men have asked us to go home again. We have heard that they want us to go back, but we will not go. We are not warriors, and do not want to fight. We only want to live in peace with our wives and children, and so we stay here among the K, who are kind to us, and will not return to our homes.'

They would never dare go back, they said, and then one of them uttered a despairing appeal. 'Go you white men with the steamer to I,' he pleaded, 'and see what we have told you is true. Perhaps if other white men, who do not hate us, go there, Bula Matadi may stop from hating us, and we may be

able to go home again.' A few more questions produced the evidence of two natives who had escaped similarly with other tribes, and then Casement continued his inquiries in a fresh group of huts.

An old chief was sitting in the open council-house of the village with a man and two boys. Another man joined them, and an old woman, who began to speak volubly of how the Government had worked them so hard in the rubber plantations that it had become impossible to tend their own fields and gardens, and they had begun to starve to death. Her own children had died, her sons had been killed. The two men kept on murmuring assent, as her story continued, and then the old chief broke in to say how they used to hunt elephants long ago — there were plenty in the forests — and they had had plenty of meat. 'But Bula Matadi killed the elephant hunters because they could not get rubber, and so we starved. We were sent out to get rubber, and when we came back with little rubber, we were shot.'

'Who shot you?' asked Casement, still incredulous; and once again the names of the white men accused were promptly forthcoming. 'How do you know it was the white man who sent the soldiers? It might be only these savage soldiers themselves.' 'No, no,' the old chief protested; 'sometimes we brought rubber into the white man's stations. We took rubber to D E's station, E E, and to F F, and to—'s station (naming again the same man he had just mentioned before). When it was not enough rubber the white man would put some of us in lines, one behind the other, and would shoot through all our bodies. Sometimes he would shoot us like that with his own hand; sometimes his soldiers would do it.'

'You mean to say you were killed in the Government posts themselves by the Government white men themselves, or under their eyes?' Casement asked, and the chief replied more emphatically than ever: 'We were killed in the stations of the white men themselves. We were killed by the white man himself. We were shot before his eyes.'

Again and again the same names, D E, B C, and L M, were

repeated with a terrible emphasis of hatred, as Casement went from house to house through the hot hours of the afternoon until the sun had set. He observed the industry of these refugees, who had accepted a voluntary slavery. They worked on all day at their weaving or their metal-work, while their self-chosen masters could take life easily, and thank their gods that they had not yet experienced the tyranny of the rubber plantations. All through the evening, as he rested in the house where he had been given shelter for the night, the villagers trooped in to continue their tale of tragedy. In the morning he left early to return to the Congo bank, and passing through a village within five miles of the river, where he had heard that more of the refugees had penetrated, he recognised their head-dresses at once. But they were too frightened of detection to speak, and he passed on. Looking back as he left the village, he could see many heads peering timidly out of the doors.

All through the night and through the following days, as he waited for the opportunity to resume his journey, their stories burned in his brain. How much of all they had said could possibly be true? His own note-book and the corroboration of his interpreters and guides were clear evidence that he at least could never explain away. He had been sent out to ascertain and to report the truth. Yet even if he were to accept one-half of what they said, what earthly likelihood was there that anyone at home could ever believe what he might accept as truth himself? The whole power of the rubber kings, the whole influence of the Belgian Court – and all that that still counted for at Buckingham Palace and in Whitehall, even since Queen Victoria's death – would be mobilised to the utmost extent to break down his evidence, and to discredit him.

Yet those frenzied negro faces, those gesticulations of despair and of suppressed hatred, haunted him night and day. He had never dreamed how far his own future was to be identified with their protection. He had learned so much already, almost by accident, through his own reckless habit of seizing upon every opportunity that arose, that there could be no hope of any

reconciliation between him and those whom he had been sent out to spy upon. Whatever he reported – mitigate the evidence as he might – there could only be war to the death between him and them.

The issue was to be between their truth and his truth. Come what might, and whatever the evidence of his own eyes and ears might be, he decided that there should be neither concealment nor exaggeration. Already the hope of gaining credence was growing dismally remote, but he determined at once that there should be no deflection from the duty which his own conscience imposed.

On one point he made up his mind: he would no longer trust to the services of the Government steamships. Luck helped him, and he succeeded in finding a small steam launch which he chartered at once for his own use; and on 23rd July he embarked upon it to pursue his investigations without being under the observation of the officials of the Government or of the Concession Companies.

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He had steamed some hundred miles further up river and disembarked at a small village on the banks. Entering a plantation which had two huts, with five men and one woman present when he arrived, he recognised their headaddresses immediately as members of the same tribe of refugees. A young man, apparently of about twenty-two or twenty-three, answered his questions with an air of frankness.

They were refugees here also, and the same story of forced labour on the rubber plantations came out again. His own village, he said, had to bring three hundred baskets of india-rubber, besides kwanga and fowls, and compulsory work on broad paths connecting each village with the next. What payment did they receive? Casement asked, and in his diary he noted: 'This cannot be true; he must be exaggerating,' in comment upon the answer that the sole payment was one piece of cotton cloth, and no more. The four other men in the hut were wearing the rough palm-fibre cloth of the country looms, and they pointed to this in corroboration of the young

man's story. Then came the same fierce outburst: 'We were then killed for not bringing in enough rubber.'

Seeking to test the previous story, Casement asked: Were they ever mutilated as proof for the soldiers that they had killed men? 'There was no need for proof,' was the answer, 'the white man was there himself. Men and women were put in a line with a palm tree and shot.' The young man pushed three of his four companions forward in a line behind each other. 'The white man used to put us like that and shoot all with one cartridge,' he said. And then he added savagely: 'That was often done, and worse things.'

How was it, Casement asked, that if they had to work so hard they could leave their own country and come to see their friends? The answer was simple enough; they had escaped the sentries – there were always four soldiers with rifles in every village – and now they dared not go home. The soldiers were in every village still, and whenever the men went out to get rubber, they used to leave one man behind to protect their women from the soldiers. But the protection was no use, the young man said, for when the soldiers found the man who had been left behind, they would refuse to believe that he had been left to guard the women, and they would shoot him for shirking work. They all begged Casement to come back with them to their own homes and they would show him that they were speaking the truth.

But his journey was still before him, and he left them and returned to the river-bank. As he steamed on up river, he looked through his diary again, and he noted deliberately that these statements he had taken down 'seem to me, if not false, greatly exaggerated, although the statements were made with every air of conviction and sincerity.' It was the last he was to see of that luckless tribe. But later, when he was at Stanley Pool, he was to receive a letter from which he copied out an extract, which in due time was to be incorporated in his report and circulated with it by the British Government to its ambassadors in every capital.

The writer gave him more recent information, which told

him incidentally that 'the infamous wretch, D E, of whom you heard so much yourself from the refugees,' had gone, after he had 'depopulated the country.' His successor, a kind and excellent official, had been working heroically since, and the people were beginning timidly to come back and work in the station that he had reformed. 'M N told me that when he took over the station from D E, he visited the prison, and almost fainted, so horrible was the condition of the place, and the poor wretches in it. He told me of many things he had heard from the soldiers. Of D E shooting with his own hand man after man who had come with an insufficient quantity of rubber, of his putting several, one behind the other, and shooting them all with one cartridge. Those who accompanied me also heard from the soldiers many frightful stories, and abundant confirmation of what was told us at N about the taking to D E of the organs of the men slain by the sentries of the various posts. I saw a letter from the present officer at F F to M N, in which he upbraids him for not using more vigorous means, telling him to talk less and shoot more, and reprimanding him for not killing more than one in a district under his care where there was a little trouble. M N is due in Belgium in about three months, and says he will land one day and begin denouncing his predecessor the next.'

Another letter was to reach him also, with further evidence, and it, too, was incorporated and published in Casement's report. This informant had acceded to the entreaties of some of the refugees who begged him to escort them back to their old home. It was the end of the dry season, and many of the water-courses had quite dried up, but they had plodded on through the parched grass plains, alternating with forest, while the guides avoided all the villages for fear of being seen. On through more forests, and across a long gloomy valley, dripping after sudden rain, they had groped their way, losing it often where elephants had trampled down the undergrowth and the small thorn palms. A large herd of elephants had stampeded close by them on their journey, terrifying them with their trumpeting and the smashing down of trees. On the second

cold and hunger. Sometimes the quantity brought was not sufficient, and then several would be killed to frighten us to bring more. Some tried to run away, and died of hunger and privation in the forest in trying to avoid the State posts."

"But," I said, "if the sentries killed you like that, what was the use? You could not bring more rubber when there were fewer people."

"Oh! as to that, we do not understand it. These are the facts."

'And looking around on the scene of desolation, on the untended farms and neglected palms, one could not but believe that in the main the story was true. From State sentries came confirmation and particulars even more horrifying, and the evidence of a white man as to the state of the country – the unspeakable condition of the prisons at the State posts – all combined to convince me over and over again, that, during the last seven years, this "domaine privé" of King Leopold has been a veritable "hell on earth."

'The present regime seems to be more tolerable. A small payment is made for the rubber now brought in. A little salt – say a pennyworth – for two kilogrammes of rubber, worth in Europe from six to eight francs. The collection is still compulsory, but, compared with what has gone before, the natives consider themselves fairly treated. There is a coming together of families and communities and the re-establishment of villages; but oh! in what sadly diminished numbers, and with what terrible gaps in the families. . . . Near a large State post we saw the only large and apparently normal village we came across in all the three weeks we spent in the district. One was able to form here some estimate of what the population was before the advent of the white man and the search for rubber. . . .'

'It will be observed,' Casement wrote as a footnote to this letter in his report, 'that the devastated region whence the refugees had come comprises a part of the "Domaine de la Couronne."'

That confirmation was to come later. Meanwhile the utter loneliness of his own position weighed heavily on Roger Casement as he steamed on up river to Lukolela. There he paused for two days to revisit a place that he had known sixteen years before as a district of some five thousand people. Now he found barely six hundred, and on all sides there was fearful evidence of rapid decay. Sleeping sickness was exterminating the people; but the problem of checking the disease was not lessened by the obligation of supplying such large quantities of food to the Government posts, in addition to the requirements of rubber, that it was humanly impossible for the natives to feed themselves. Casement did not even visit the Government post. He was content to observe it from the river-bank, and to note the 'charming aspect' of its well-built houses, surrounded by coffee-tree plantations extending for some distance along the shore.

Not until he passed them again on his return journey was he aware that an ally of incalculable usefulness was living near by. The Baptist missionary, Mr. Whitehead, had come to the district some four years after Casement's previous visit as a young traveller, and had since been striving desperately, with his wife, to alleviate the sufferings of the natives. Casement did not know that in the week when he was making his official investigation, Mr. Whitehead had been composing a long letter to the Governor-General of the Congo State, in reply to a request for his views concerning the means to be adopted to prevent the disease from spreading further.

Nearly two months passed before Casement returned by Lukolela and made the acquaintance of the missionary, who handed over to him copies of two letters which he had addressed to the Governor-General during that interval. Casement's own observations on the district had been confined to the statement that 'the towns I visited were very ill-kept and tumbledown, and bore no comparison, either in the class of dwelling-houses now adopted, or in the extent of cultivated ground around them, to the condition in which the people formerly dwelt.' It would have assisted him immensely, and encouraged him still more

night in the forest they had come upon another group of runaways from the rubber plantations, who had given them shelter on their hazardous journey home; but even there they had narrow escapes from death, when another tornado swept the forest and a tree had crashed down upon the tent where Casement's informant was passing the night. And then the runaways had at last put them on their right path, pointing to an overgrown road by which the rubber used to be brought in to the white men – for 'all the people had either run away, or had been killed, or died of starvation, so that there was no one to get rubber now.'

So at last the adventurous band of refugees had made their way home, under escort of Casement's friend, whose account gave fresh evidence of barbarities.

'That day we made a very long march, being nearly nine and a half hours' walking, and passing through several other large depopulated districts. On all sides were signs of a very recent large population, but all was as quiet as death, and buffaloes roamed at will amongst the still growing manioc and bananas. It was a sad day, and when, as the sun was setting, we came upon a large State post, we were plunged into still greater grief. True, there was a comfortable house at our service, and houses for all the party; but we had not been long there before we found that we had reached the centre of what was once a very thickly populated region, known as C C, from which many refugees in the neighbourhood of G had come.

'It was here a white man, known by the name of D E, lived. . . . He came to the district, and after seven months of diabolical work, left it a waste. Some of the stories current about him are not fit to record here, but the native evidence is so consistent and so universal that it is difficult to disbelieve that murder and rapine on a large scale were carried on here. His successor, a man of different nature, and much liked by the people, after more than two and a half years has succeeded in winning back to the side of the State post a few natives, and there I saw them in their wretched little huts, hardly able to call their lives their own in the presence of the new white man

(myself), whose coming among them had set them all wondering. From this there was no fear of losing the track. For many miles it was a broad road, from six to ten feet in width, and wherever there was a possibility of water settling logs were laid down. Some of these viaducts were miles in length, and must have entailed immense labour; whilst rejoicing in the great facility with which we could continue our journey, we could not help picturing the many cruel scenes which, in all probability, were a constant accompaniment to the laying of these huge logs.

‘I wish to emphasise as much as possible the desolation and emptiness of the country we passed through. That it was only very recently a well-populated country, and, as things go out here, rather more densely than usual, was very evident. After a few hours we came to a State rubber post. In nearly every instance these posts are most imposing, some of them giving rise to the supposition that several white men were residing in them. But in only one did we find a white man – the successor of D E.

‘At one place I saw lying about in the grass surrounding the post, which is built on the site of several very large towns, human bones, skulls, and in some places, complete skeletons. On inquiring the reason for this unusual sight: “Oh!” said my informant, “when the bambote (soldiers) were sent to make us cut rubber, there were so many killed we got tired of burying, and sometimes when we wanted to bury we were not allowed to.”

‘“But why did they kill you so?”

‘“Oh! sometimes we were ordered to go, and the sentry would find us preparing food to eat while in the forest, and he would shoot two or three to hurry us along. Sometimes we would try and do a little work on our plantations, so that when the harvest time came we should have something to eat, and the sentry would shoot some of us to teach us that our business was not to plant but to get rubber. Sometimes we were driven off to live for a fortnight in the forest without any food, and without anything to make a fire with, and many died of

at the outset of his hazardous and thankless journey if he could have had a few hours' conversation with the missionary. But Mr. Whitehead's evidence, thus independently forthcoming, was the more impressive when it eventually figured as an appendix to Casement's report.

Depopulation, Mr. Whitehead impressed with desperate earnestness upon the Congo Government, had been proceeding with appalling rapidity in the twelve years of his own residence at Lukolela. 'If something is not done soon,' he wrote, 'to give the people heart and remove their fear and trembling (conditions which generate fruitfully morbid conditions and proneness to attacks of disease), doubtless the whole place will be very soon denuded of its population. The pressure under which they live at present is crushing them; the food which they sadly need themselves very often must, under penalty, be carried to the State post, also grass, cane string, baskets for the "caoutchouc" (the last three items do not appear to be paid for); the "caoutchouc" must be brought in from the inland districts; their chiefs are being weakened in their prestige and physique through imprisonment, which is often cruel, and thus weakened in their authority over their own people, they are put into chains for the shortage of manioc bread and "caoutchouc."'

He begged the Governor-General to consider how unavailing the efforts of the missionaries must be in attempting to improve hygienic conditions in such circumstances. 'It is quite vain for us,' he protested, 'to teach these poor people the need of plenty of good food, for we appear to them as those who mock; they point to the food which must be taken to the post. A weekly tax of nine hundred brass rods' worth of manioc bread from one hundred and sixty women, half of whom are not capable of much hard and continuous work, does not leave much margin for them to listen to teaching concerning personal attention in matters of food.' And it was with a very forlorn hope that Mr. Whitehead set out a series of urgent measures which he considered to be immediately necessary, including the compulsory migration of the whole population to higher ground.

That letter had already been drafted when Casement's

surprise visit to Lukolela in his private steam launch had taken place. His investigation had spurred Mr. Whitehead to new efforts. The missionary himself undertook a tour of the inland district around Lukolela, and he returned with his 'blood boiling with indignation and abhorrence' at what he had seen, in company with his wife. He had dispatched a second long letter to the Governor-General before he met Casement on his return journey. His letter enumerated earlier instances of floggings and other brutalities against which he had protested in vain, and he now submitted the new evidence he had seen within the past few weeks.

'On the 17th August,' he wrote now, with all reticence broken down, 'at Mibenga, the Chief, Lisanginya, made a statement to me in the presence of others, to the following effect: They had taken the usual tax of eight baskets of rubber, and he was sent for (I think it was the 8th June when he passed on his way through our station), and the white man (M. Lecomte, M. Cadot also being present), said the baskets were too few, and that they must bring another three; meanwhile, they put the chain round his neck, the soldiers beat him with sticks, he had to cut firewood, to carry heavy trunks, and to haul logs in common with others. Three mornings he was compelled to carry the receptacle from the white man's latrine and empty it in the river. On the third day (sickening to relate), he was made to drink therefrom by a soldier named Lisasi. A youth named Masula was in the chain at the same place and time, and saw the thing done. When the three extra baskets were produced he was set at liberty. He was ill for several days after his return. I referred to this in my letter of the 28th July, but it was too horrible a thing to write the additional item until I heard the thing from the man's own lips. I blush again and again as I hear the fame of the State wherever I go, that when they chain a man now at the post they make the chained unfortunate drink the white man's defecations.

'In the evening of 21st August, on returning to Mibenga from a more inland town, Bokoko, Mrs. Whitehead and myself

saw Mpombo of Bobanga, village of Mbongi, some distance inland. He was in a horrible state. He stated that he had taken ten baskets of rubber to the post, and they wanted one more, so they chained him up to get it. He stated that he had been roughly treated by Mazamba, who had charge of him. In his utter weakness, he had stayed at Libonga (which was a village on the way), to get stronger, for about thirteen days. What must have been his condition when he arrived there I cannot imagine; he was so bad when I saw him at Mibenga. His left wrist appeared to be broken (broken by a log of wood, too heavy for him, slipping from his shoulder), one finger of the right hand was severely bruised, and had developed a large sore (this had been done, he said, with a stick with which he had been beaten), his back was badly bruised, the left shoulder was much bruised, and had been evidently slit with a knife, the left knee was bruised and feet swollen from being badly beaten, and altogether he was in a very disordered condition.

'Later, I met Mabungikindi, a Chief from Bokoko, a large town inland, who was also returning from the cabin in which he had been detained to get three more baskets of rubber. Their tax of rubber, I understand, had been doubled this year, and this was to get three more on the top of that. Poor fellow! How thin his thick-set frame had become! He was wearing his State Chief's medal. He took it in his hand and asked me to look at it. I cringed with shame. He asked me if we did that sort of thing in our country. I replied we did not. "And this," he said, "is how the State treats us: gives us this, and chains up the wearer and beats him. Is that good?"

'Do you wonder, Sir, that the natives hate the State, and that its fame is almost impossible of cleansing in this part? Again and again I had the painful fortune to meet men coming back from imprisonment on account of rubber. The State, through its agents at Lukolela, is driving these undisciplined people to desperation and rebellion. There is a rumour set abroad from the State post that the soldiers are coming from Yumbi to fight the inland people because of some words which have been brought back from Bolebe and Bonginda. If we are

going to have another war, it will be one which has been engendered by this sort of treatment.'

The letter proceeded to give other instances of 'injustice which can scarcely be equalled by any of these barbarians.' He spoke openly of the 'mode of slavery adopted at the post' – by which men were engaged for a certain term, and then told they could not have their pay until they engaged themselves for another term or else brought in a substitute. 'I know those who have left their earnings in the hands of the Chef de Poste,' he wrote, 'rather than begin again. Such compulsion is contrary to civilised law, and is rightly termed slavery, and is utterly illegal. I appeal to you, Sir, that these things may cease from being perpetrated on your subjects, and this defaming of the name of the State.'

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Unaware that an ally was fighting the same battle at the same time, Roger Casement had gone on up river on his lonely journey. He was to discover things which were to make even the Baptist missionary's evidence seem mild by comparison. The next stopping place he had planned for his journey was a group of three towns, where he could still remember being greeted, sixteen years before, by scores of men in their native canoes inviting him to come and spend the night in their village. On his arrival now no trace whatever of the three towns remained. The villages and their fields had been converted into a 'very well laid-out and admirably maintained military station,' whose commandant and officers greeted him with a cordial welcome. The military centre now included a training camp where some eight hundred native recruits were being drilled by a European staff of officers and N.C.O.'s.

Here at last, he noted, there were even signs of the native population returning. The rubber tax had been removed, and the refugees who had escaped to the French side of the river were now coming back to their own lands.

But devastation seemed to extend interminably as he travelled farther up the river and spent several weeks exploring the country of dense forests around Lake Mantumba. There.

on the fringe of the Equator, the wild Ntomba tribes were still cannibals, armed with very fine bows and arrows and ill-made spears. Round the wide lake, too, there still lived the pigmy Batwas, and among both tribes cannibalism was still practised with little hindrance by the Congo Government. Their cannibalistic activities had survived more hardily than their tradition as enterprising traders and fishermen. Casement remembered how he had seen them issuing out from the lake upon the main waters of the Congo, to travel great distances often, fighting their way if necessary to find purchasers for their fish or their slaves, or to bring slaves home. All that had ceased – fish-catching as well as slave-catching.

Casement learned soon why their trade had gone, when a native told him of how his big canoe had been confiscated without payment by a Belgian official who wanted it for carrying timber. Why did he not claim compensation from the local magistrate, Casement asked. The native replied simply by raising his loin cloth and pointing to the scars where he had been flogged with a chicotte, adding that if he complained he 'would only get more of these.' It was more than probably true, as Casement's informant told him, that one of the Belgian officials had given him three 'wives' on one occasion, when a number of women, taken prisoners in a 'war' upon a town in the forest, which had failed to send in adequate supplies of food, were distributed because there was nowhere else to put them.

Even the rubber Companies had given up as hopeless the attempt to collect rubber from such barbarous tribes, their numbers had diminished by slaughter and by raids till barely one-third remained. The survivors, however, were still required to deliver food-stuffs in fixed amounts, regardless of how their number dwindled, either to the military camp at Trebu or to the big coffee plantation at Bikoro. Every fortnight also they were required to bring in a fixed supply of gum-copal from the forests, each village being obliged to bring in ten bags or about half a ton each month. The actual weight to be carried was considerably more, for much was lost in cleaning and chipping and washing the crude gum. They were paid for what they

brought in – receiving one piece of blue drill, or rough cotton cloth, costing something less than ten shillings by local standards, for every quarter ton of gum.

The profit for the gum traders was certainly considerable; for the average value of the village's forced contribution, for which they paid half a sovereign, was at least £50. At times, too, it was more convenient to pay in brass rods than in cloth, and the one hundred and fifty brass rods which were paid on such occasions were worth not much more than a few francs. With wages for a whole village at about £10 a year, the traders had little to complain of when they could collect £360 worth of gum-copal alone, to say nothing of the forced levies of food and fish that were not paid for.

As a secondary source of revenue for the Congo State, such profit was by no means unsatisfactory. The wages were far below the ordinary rates paid in any other establishment on the Congo. Casement discovered that any one of the natives employed on his own yacht – with the handsome salary of five francs a month in addition to one franc a week for food rations – was receiving more every week than the Moutaka householder received in an entire year for his compulsory public service, entailing continuous work that could never be relaxed.

Baskets, too, were collected as a forced levy, in addition to kwanga and fish, from certain villages; and the basket-makers complained that at times they were paid neither in cloth nor in brass rods, but with reels of sewing cotton and shirt buttons. To a proud people who wore no clothes whatever except a loin cloth, this form of payment was not altogether acceptable. But experience had taught them that any payment was better than flogging. That was so often their reward when they had carried as much as they had been able to make during the week, across some twenty miles of the lake, and pleaded that they had brought all that they had been able to do in the time. The chiefs particularly were liable to incur punishment in such cases, and in their naked state, it was easy to see the great weals of recent floggings across their buttocks and thighs.

Protection in regard to their wages in the forests of the

King's Domain, had been laid down strictly by a decree of 1896; but the emptiness of the Government's own store, when Casement visited it and found it to contain nothing but some lengths of old cotton cloth, was damning evidence that no attempt was made to enforce the regulations. At least one unmistakable proof of improvement was visible, he noted. Coffee and cocoa had taken the place of the rubber trade; and with the abolition of the rubber tax, the garrison of soldiers had been reduced from several hundreds to less than twenty. What the presence of these large garrisons had meant in brutality and oppression Casement had learned without difficulty during his fortnight's explorations around the lake. The terror that had been spread by the white men and their armed native guards was such that, even where the people were beginning to return to the villages they had abandoned all along the lakeside, they fled now at the first sight of his steam launch. Only after much persuasion by his native guides could they be induced to return.

The reign of terror was over, but Casement was able to obtain first-hand accounts of what had taken place while it lasted. 'War' was the term with which the Government officials attempted to explain every act of brutality. Casement's own considered judgment, which he stated unhesitatingly in his report, was that 'in ninety-nine per cent. of the "wars" in King Leopold's Domain, the cause was simply failure on the part of the people to supply produce, labour or men, as demanded by the State.' The natives, he declared, were in most cases 'merely trying to defend themselves and their houses from attacks made on them by the black soldiers sent to 'punish them for some failure to do their duty to the State,' and if the cause for war was weak, the way in which it was carried on was often revolting. It is averred that canoes have been seen returning from distant expeditions with no white man in charge, and with human hands dangling from a stick in the bow of the canoe – or in small baskets – being carried to the white man as proofs of their courage and devotion to duty. If one in fifty of native reports are true, there has been great lack on the part

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of some white men. They, too, are accused of forgetting the subjects and conditions of war.

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Day after day, as the steam launch stopped from place to place along the equatorial lake, Casement was to be seen walking among the deserted villages, encouraging the people to confide their sorrows to him. He could see the women coming back carrying their babies, once his guides had restored confidence. He saw them bringing in even their household utensils and their food which they had snatched up in escaping at the mere sight of a white man's steamship. Fear of this kind, Casement declared in his report, had been utterly unknown when he had visited these regions less than twenty years before; in much more remote places the people used to flock from all sides to greet a white visitor. He took down statement after statement from them in his diary, placing them on record with his own formal attestation as the British Consul. Some of them he included afterwards in his report to Lord Lansdowne, and they were terrible enough. As for the statements made by the men, he found that some of them were unfit for repetition.

Of the statements made by young women, the following were a few specimens:

Q Q's STATEMENT

'I was born at K K. After my father died my mother and I went to L L. When we returned to K K soon after that P Q came to fight with us because of rubber. K K did not want to take rubber to the white man. We and our mothers ran away very far into the bush. The Bula Matadi soldiers were very strong, and they fought hard, one soldier was killed, and they killed one K K man. Then the white man said let us go home, and they went home, and then we, too, came out of the bush. This was the first fight. •

'After that another fighting took place. I, my mother, grandmother, and my sister, we ran away into the bush. The

soldiers came and fought us, and left the town and followed us into the bush. When the soldiers came into the bush near us they were calling my mother by name, and I was going to answer, but my mother put her hand to my mouth to stop me. Then they went to another side, and then we left that place and went to another. When they called my mother, if she had not stopped me from answering, we would all have been killed then. A great number of our people were killed by the soldiers. The friends who were left buried the bodies, and there was very much weeping.

'After that there was not any fighting for some time. Then the soldiers came again to fight with us, and we ran into the bush, but they really came to fight with M M. They killed a lot of M M people, and then one soldier came out to K K, and the K K people killed him with a spear. And when the other soldiers heard that their friend was killed, they came in a large number and followed us into the bush. Then the soldiers fired a gun, and some people were killed. After that they saw a little bit of my mother's head, and the soldiers ran quickly towards the place where we were and caught my grandmother, my mother, my sister, and another little one younger than us. Several of the soldiers argued about my mother, because each wanted her for a wife, so they finally decided to kill her. They killed her with a gun – they shot her through the stomach – and she fell, and when I saw that I cried very much, because they killed my mother and grandmother, and I was left alone. My mother was near to the time of her confinement at that time. And they killed my grandmother too, and I saw it all done.

'They took hold of my sister and asked where her older sister was, and she said: "She has just run away." They said: "Call her." She called me, but I was too frightened and would not answer, and I ran and went away and came out at another place, and I could not speak much because my throat was very sore. I saw a little bit kwanga lying on the ground and I picked it up to eat. At that place there used to be a lot of people, but when I got there there were none. My sister was

taken to P, and I was at this place alone. One day I saw a man coming from the back country. He was going to kill me, but afterwards he took me to a place where there were people, and there I saw my step-father. . . . He asked to buy me from this man, but the man would not let him. He said: "She is my slave now; I found her."

'One day the men went fishing, and when I looked I saw the soldiers coming, so I ran away, but a string caught my foot and I fell, and a soldier named N N N caught me. He handed me over to another soldier, and as we went we saw some Q people fishing, and the soldiers took a lot of fish from them and a Q woman, and we went to P, and they took me to the white man.'

R R's STATEMENT

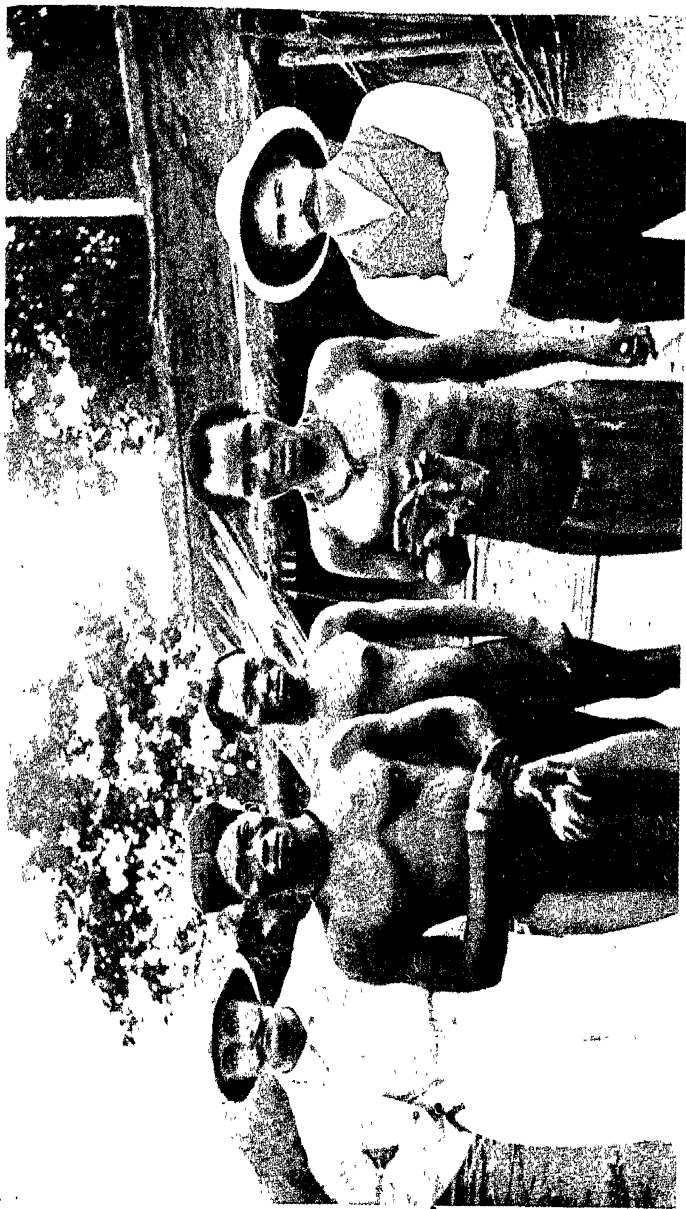
'I, R R, came from N N. N N and R fought, and they killed several R people, and one R man, O O O, took a man and sent him to L L L to go and tell the white man to come and fight with Nkoho. The white man who fought with N N first was named Q R. He fought with us in the morning; then I ran away with my mother. Then the men came to call us back to our town. When we were returning to our town, as we were nearing, we asked how many people were killed, and they told us three were killed. Q R had burned down all the houses, so we were scattered to other places again; only some of the men were left to build again. After a while we returned to our town and began to plant our gardens. I have finished the first part of the story.

'We stayed a long time at our town, then the white man who fought with N N first went and told R S that the N N people were very strong, so R S made up his mind to come and fight us. When he came to O we heard the news; it was high-water season. We got into our canoes to run away, but the men stayed behind to wait for the soldiers. When the white man came he did not try to fight them during the day, but went to the back and waited for night to come. When the soldiers came at night the people ran away, so they did not kill

anybody, only a sick man whom they found in a house, whom they (the soldiers) killed, and disfigured his body very much. They hunted out all the native money they could get, and in the morning they went away.

'After they went away we came back to the town, but we found it was all destroyed. We remained in our town a long time; the white man did not come back to fight with us. After a while we heard that R S was coming to fight us. R S sent some Q men to tell the N N people to send people to go and work for him, and also to send goats. The N N people would not do it, so he went to fight our town. When we were told by the men that the soldiers were coming, we began to run away. My mother told me to wait for her until she got some things ready to take with us, but I told her we must go now, as the soldiers were coming. I ran away and left my mother, and went with two old people who were running away, but we were caught, and the old people were killed, and the soldiers made me carry the baskets with the things those dead people had and the hands they cut off. I went on with the soldiers.

'Then we came to another town, and they asked me the way and the name of the place, and I said, "I do not know"; but they said, "If you do not tell us we will kill you," so I told them the name of the town. Then we went into the bush to look for people, and we heard children crying, and a soldier went quickly over to the place and killed a mother and four children, and then we left off looking for the people in the bush, and they asked me again to show them the way out, and if I did not they would kill me, so I showed them the way. They took me to R S and he told me to go and stay with the soldier who caught me. They tied up six people, but I cannot tell how many people were killed, because there were too many for me to count. They got my little sister and killed her, and threw her into a house and set fire to the house. When finished with that we went to O O, and stayed there four days, and then we went to P P, and because the people there ran away they killed the P P Chief.



NATIVES OF THE NSONGO DISTRICT WITH HANDS OF THEIR COUNTRYMEN MURDERED BY
'SENTRIES.' THE WHITE MEN ARE REV. J. H. HARRIS AND REV. EDGAR STANNARD.

(Reproduced by kind permission from the *Illustrated London News* 1891)

'We stayed there several days; then we came to P, and from there we came on to Q Q, and there they put the prisoners in chains, but they did not put me in chains, and then he (R S) went to fight with L L, and killed a lot of people and six people tied up. When he came back from L L we started and came on to Q. . . .

'My father was killed in the same fight as I was captured. My mother was killed by a sentry stationed at N N after I left.'

S S's STATEMENT

'S S came from the far back R R. One day the soldiers went to her town to fight; she did not know that the soldiers had come to fight them until she saw the people from the other side of the town running towards their end, then they too began to run away. Her father, mother, three brothers, and sister were with her. About four men were killed at this scare. It was at this fight that one of the station girls, P P P, was taken prisoner. After several days, during which time they were staying at other villages, they went back to their own town. They were only a few days in their own town when they heard that the soldiers who had been at the other towns were coming their way too, so the men gathered up all their bows and arrows and went out to the next town to wait for the soldiers to fight them. Some of the men stayed behind with all the women and children.

'After that S S and her mother went out to their garden to work; while there S S told her mother that she had dreamed that Bula Matadi was coming to fight with them, but her mother told her she was trying to tell stories. After that S S went back to the house, and left her mother in the garden. After she had been a little while in the house with her little brother and sister, she heard the firing of guns. When she heard that she took up her little sister and a big basket with a lot of native money in it, but she could not manage both, so she left the basket behind and ran away with the youngest child; the little boy ran away by himself. The oldest boys had gone away to wait for the

soldiers at the other town. As she went past she heard her mother calling to her, but she told her to run away in another direction, and she would go on with the little sister. She found her little sister rather heavy for her, so she could not run very fast, and a great number of people went past her, and she was left alone with the little one. Then she left the main road and went to hide in the bush.

'When night came on, she tried to find the road again and follow the people who had passed her, but she could not find them, so she had to sleep in the bush alone. She wandered about in the bush for six days, then she came upon a town named S S. At this town she found that the soldiers were fighting there too. Before entering the town she dug up some sweet manioc to eat, because she was very, very hungry. She went about looking for a fire to roast her sweet manioc, but she could not find any. Then she heard a noise as of people talking, so she hid her little sister in a deserted house, and went to see those people she had heard talking, thinking they might be those from her own town, but when she got to the house where the noise was coming from she saw one of the soldier's boys sitting at the door of the house, and then she could not quite understand their language, so she knew that they were not her people, so she took fright and ran away in another direction from where she had put her sister.

'After she had reached the outside of the town she stood still, and remembered that she would be scolded by her father and mother for leaving her sister, so she went back at night. She came upon a house where the white man was sleeping; she saw the sentry on a deck chair outside in front of the house, apparently asleep, because he did not see her slip past him. Then she came to the house where her sister was, and took her, and she started to run away again. They slept in a deserted house at the very end of the town. Early in the morning the white man sent out the soldiers to go and look for people all over the town and in the houses. S S was standing outside in front of the house, trying to make her sister walk some, as she

was very tired, but the little sister could not run away, through weakness.

While they were both standing outside the soldiers came upon them and took them both. One of the soldiers said, "We might keep them both, the little one is not bad-looking"; but the others said "No, we are not going to carry her all the way; we must kill the youngest girl." So they put a knife through the child's stomach, and left the body lying there where they had killed it. They took S S to the next town, where the white man had told them to go and fight. They did not go back to the house where the white man was, but went straight on to the next town. The white man's name was C D. The soldiers gave S S something to eat on the way. When they came to this next town they found that all the people had run away.

In the morning the soldiers wanted S S to go and look for manioc for them, but she was afraid to go out as they looked to her as if they wanted to kill her. The soldiers thrashed her very much and began to drag her outside, but the corporal (N N N) came and took her by the hand and said, "We must not kill her; we must take her to the white man." Then they went back to the town where C D was, and they showed him S S. C D handed her over to the care of a soldier. At this town she found that they had caught three people, and among them was a very old woman, and the cannibal soldiers asked C D to give them the old woman to eat, and C D told them to take her. Those soldiers took the woman and cut her throat, and then divided her and ate her. S S saw all this done.

In the morning the soldier who was looking after her was sent on some duty by C D, and before the soldier went out he had told S S to get some manioc leaves not far from the house and to cook them. After he left she went to do as he had told her, and those cannibal soldiers went to C D and said that S S was trying to run away, so they wanted to kill her; but he told them to tie her, so the soldiers tied her to a tree and she had to stand in the sun nearly all day. When the soldier who had charge of her came back he found her tied up. C D called to

him to ask about S S, so he explained to C D what he had told S S to do, so he was allowed to untie her.

‘They stayed several days at this place, then C D asked S S if she knew all the towns round about, and she said yes, then he told her to show them the way, so that they could go and catch people. They came to a town and found only one woman, who was dying of sickness, and the soldiers killed her with a knife. At several towns they found no people, but at last they came to a town where several people had run to as they did not know where else to go, because the soldiers were fighting everywhere. At this town they killed a lot of people – men, women, and children – and took some as prisoners. They cut the hands off those they had killed, and brought them to C D; they spread out the hands in a row for C D to see.

‘After that they left to return to Bikoro. They took a lot of prisoners with them. The hands which they had cut off they just left lying, because the white man had seen them, so they did not need to take them to P. Some of the soldiers were sent to P with the prisoners, but C D himself and the other soldiers went to T T where there was another white man. The prisoners were sent to S T. S S was about two weeks at P, and then she ran away into the bush at P for three days, and when she was found she was brought back to S T, and he asked her why she had run away. She said because the soldiers had thrashed her.

‘S S’s mother was killed by soldiers, and her father died of starvation, or rather, he refused to eat because he was bereaved of his wife and all his children.’

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These stories might belong to the past, but the victims from whom Casement had gathered them were still so young that some of his witnesses were, even now no more than boys or girls. And before he left the lake, he had actually seen with his own eyes the evidence that was of supreme importance – the maimed arms of those whose hands had been cut off by Government soldiers.

It was a horrible moment when he was confronted with a young man whose hands had been beaten off with the butt ends of rifles against a tree, and another – still a child barely twelve years of age – whose right hand had been cut off at the wrist. In both cases the mutilation had been committed in the presence of white officers, whose names Casement was able to report. Six natives, in all, he was told, had been thus mutilated while the attempt to collect rubber around the lake was being enforced. One was a girl, three had been small boys, one a young man, and the last an old woman; and all but one were dead before Casement arrived. But their relatives told him of the way in which the mutilations had been committed.

On the day of his departure from Lake Mantumba, there arrived five men from another village on the lake who had come to show him that their hands also had been cut off. Word of Casement's visit had spread among all the people round, but when they came they were told that they were just too late. A messenger brought him this news just as he was preparing to depart, but they had already started home again disconsolately and could not be found in time.

There was much else for him to see further up river, and he could not wait. But he carried with him from this district of desolation among the forests, the full notes made concerning the two cases he had actually seen. They too were to be circulated by Lord Lansdowne to every Embassy in Europe before six months had passed. It had been a gruesome interview, as he had asked the mutilated native, whose arms hung limply with their withered wrists, to tell him how his hands had been lost.

Government soldiers, the poor wretch had answered him, had raided several villages, burning the houses, and killing people; and before they had arrived in his own village, his own people had to flee, leaving him and a few others behind with food to offer, as a forlorn hope of propitiation, to the soldiers. The armed men had surged into the deserted village, with a European officer in charge, and they had immediately made prisoners of every man they found, tying them up outside in

the torrential rain. Their hands were bound tightly with native rope, and all night long while the rain fell in a cataract their hands had swollen till the thongs had cut through them to their bones. The soldiers had brought in a native prisoner with them, and he was killed by them during the night.

They had found eight men waiting to receive them in the village, and of these they killed two more the same night; so that on the following morning there were only six, with their hands swollen horribly by the sodden thongs that bound them. Four of the six were released, and of the remaining two, one was the village chief, who had crept back and been caught while trying to find fuel to make a fire for his wife who had been taken sick during the fierce rains of the night. In despair and in agony from his hands he tried to escape, but was killed, and only Casement's informant had then remained. The soldiers had seen how his hands had swollen, and the sight roused them to a new lust of cruelty. They took him to a tree and battered his swollen hands against it with their rifle butts, while the white officer in command of them watched from not far off, where he was drinking palm wine. Then they had let their prisoner go free, and he had staggered away. His hands had fallen off, cut through by the tightness of the sodden rope, and made lifeless by the battering of the soldiers' rifles.

On his way onwards from the lake, Casement called again at the military camp at Irebu and, without lodging a formal complaint while his investigation was still in progress, he alluded to the case he had just heard and seen. The Commandant immediately promised an investigation; and on his return journey he learned that the Commissary-General of the Equator District had come down at once and held an inquiry, as a result of which provision was now being made for the young man. But there were other cases in which Casement could bring no redress. There was that boy of twelve who gave him the whole story of how his own hand had been cut off five years before. He had felt the fierce agony of pain as the soldiers severed it, when he lay wounded by a bullet, pretending to be dead, and not daring to utter a sound. He had known that he

would be instantly murdered, for both his mother and his father lay beside him, freshly killed.

It had been too late – though only by a few months – to hear the evidence of an old woman in the same village whose niece gave a similar story. The old woman had dropped down beside her son when he was shot dead, and she too had made no sign or sound while they severed her hand and carried it off, with her son's head, as proof that they had done their work.

'Of acts of persistent mutilation by Government soldiers of this nature,' Roger Casement wrote deliberately in his report, 'I had many statements made to me, some of them specifically, others in a general way. Of the fact of this mutilation and the causes inducing it there can be no shadow of doubt. It was not a native custom prior to the coming of the white man; it was not the outcome of the primitive instincts of savages in their fights between village and village; it was the deliberate act of the soldiers of a European administration, and these men themselves never made any concealment that in committing these acts they were obeying the positive orders of their superiors. I obtained several specific instances of this practice of mutilation having been carried out in the town of Q itself, when the Government soldiers had come across from P to raid it or compel its inhabitants to work.'

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At every turn fresh evidence of brutality or of crushing oppression was forthcoming. Having decided upon the next stages of his journey, Casement engaged six more men to assist in navigating his steam launch. He was preparing to depart, when the State Chief of the village arrived in haste at his steam launch, protesting furiously against the withdrawal of any of his men. He threatened to have the six men whom Casement had selected tied up and sent over to the Government official. He placed them under arrest, in custody of three soldiers, armed with Albini rifles, whom he summoned to prevent Casement from taking them away. Casement was dismayed by the panic that he had inadvertently aroused, and

he did his best to make amends to the chief whom he had so perturbed.

The explanation, as usual, was simple fear. 'I am responsible each week,' the chief of the village told the British Consul, 'for six hundred rations of fish which must be delivered at Bikoro. If it fails, I am held responsible, and will be punished. I have been flogged more than once for a failure in the fish supply, and I will not run any risks. If these men go, I shall be short-handed; they must stay to help in getting the weekly tax.' The justice of his protests could not be denied, and Casement was able to get the extra men he required for his steamer only by leaving the chief enough money to hire labour to take their place.

Yet this was by no means the most unfortunate village in regard to the forced supply of fish. At some of the villages at the farther end of Lake Mantumba, Casement had seen the natives preparing to row the long journey of forty-five miles to the military camp at Irebu with the supplies required of them every week. He had seen how rough and how stormy the great lake could be. It required little imagination to know their feelings when they had to spend two long days in paddling outwards, and two more days on the way back, besides giving up their time to catching the fish for the soldiers.

It was no wonder that the punishment for failure had to be brutally severe if such a system were to be maintained at all. Casement learned from the officials themselves that though they had given up flogging the unfortunate natives, they had been obliged to devise another form of punishment. It was more effective than even flogging could ever be. Under the new system, one man was detained as a prisoner for every ten rations that were short in the supply from his village; and the prisoners would have to remain at forced labour at Bikoro – or even be sent up to work at the Equator headquarters at Coquilhatville – until the arrears had been brought in.

Yet how could this system of detention be enforced when its victims were not even brought before any tribunal with power to impose imprisonment? Casement was given name after

name of men who had been taken away to distant places, to work as prisoners for indefinite periods. There was no law or statute that he could discover which could justify it. No more thankless task could be imagined than Casement's efforts to ascertain the legality of their methods from the officials of the trading companies.

But he had grown reckless of how much unpopularity he incurred. There was scarcely even a pretence, he found, of carrying out the conditions laid down by the Royal Decrees of 1891 and 1892. They had established a system of taxation and required that a list of the inhabitants in each village should be prepared, and a schedule of the levies expected from them. Some sort of census had indeed been taken here and there, when the settlements first started; but there had never been any revision of the burdens when the population died away. He was able to see how the system worked under such conditions at various places, where the tragic remnant of a once numerous village was now condemned to supplying what had been assessed as the levy upon a larger community.

A small boy of some seven years old whom he saw in one place had recently been bought from his uncle for one thousand rods – the equivalent of fifty francs – to pay a debt that represented several weeks' shortage of supplies. Casement set out next day to find the uncle who had sold the boy, and the discovery was illuminating. The male population of the village, he found, had been reduced to eight men. Of these, two were actually in prison at Coquilhatville for failing to furnish the full requirements of supply. Only six were now available to produce the enormous amount that had to be delivered every week – some seven hundred pounds of kwanga; nine hundred palm thatching mats; two canoe loads of firewood for steamer fuel; and ninety-five rations of fish. Besides all this, in addition to providing for their own families and themselves, the unfortunate six were obliged to assist in hunting game in the woods for the staff of the European station. Some slight payment was given for these crushing levies, but the total was less than twenty-two francs a week. The payment for two canoe loads

of firewood only was five centimes, or one brass rod. Making a little calculation to assess the market value of the supplies that had to be delivered, Casement discovered that the total should really be one hundred and thirty-two francs instead of twenty-two. The palm mats were being paid for at one-fifth of their market value, the fish at exactly one-tenth. Reckoning the burden for the full year, he found that the uncle who had been driven to pawning his nephew for fifty francs was contributing over £80 in direct taxation, and receiving less than £10 for what he delivered.

Yet the weight of that appalling yoke was neither so heavy nor so galling as the additional burdens. Fine after fine had been imposed upon villages that failed to bring in all that was required of them. The accumulation of arrears was already beyond all hope of liquidation. Whenever time could be spared from the ceaseless collection of forced supplies, the village headmen would come to make piteous appeals for the release from imprisonment of the few extra men who might assist in carrying an insupportable burden. Casement offered at once to bring his unfortunate informant to Coquilhatville so that his case might be heard in detail; but he refused to leave his mother defenceless, and Casement could only collect corroborative evidence, which in fact confirmed his story on all sides.

There was further confirmation in abundance when he visited another village a few days later, marching some three miles inland through a swampy forest. Here, too, the village was groaning under the recent imposition of heavy fines for shortage of supplies. The 'town' consisted of a long, single street of native huts situated in the midst of a clearing in the forest; and Casement's accustomed eye could estimate the population at roughly some six hundred people of all ages. They watched his arrival with his guides, and before long a number of men and women approached him to answer his questions. It was the usual story of incessant and onerous demands for weekly supplies of kwanga and of fowls for the Europeans, and of immense loads of firewood that had to be carried long distances. Casement saw many bundles of the

firewood being got ready for carrying when he was there, and he reckoned the weight of each at much more than half a hundredweight.

As usual, there had been frequent failures to maintain the required amount, and the inevitable stories of reprisals. This place had been raided by a force of some thirty soldiers, under a European officer, only a few months before. The people had all fled from their homes, but had been persuaded to return. Immediately the principal men of the village had been tied up to trees in punishment, and a detachment of twenty-five hostages had been requisitioned to serve the Government as labourers far away. Casement was given their names, but their relatives had had no word since their removal of where they had been taken.

Upon the native population thus reduced, a savage fine of fifty-five thousand brass rods had been imposed. To raise so vast a sum had been impossible, and many of them had been compelled, in the hopeless effort, to sell their children and their wives. Parents who had been forced to sell their young children implored Casement to secure their return. They had scarcely been able to raise one thousand rods per child. One man, forced to sell his wife, had only been able to get nine hundred rods; another had seen his wife taken away from him by force by the native sergeant who desired her. There had been brutal murders during the military raid; resistance had been utterly impossible.

What mercy or redress could Casement promise them? Yet he was able, before he journeyed on, to secure the return of one small boy and of one little girl to their parents. Even while he was in the district at another village, a further fine of twenty thousand rods was in course of collection among all the households along the river-bank. He saw the piles of brass rods being collected in houses that he entered. He was able to count one pile of nearly three thousand rods, that had been brought in by all the members of the family. More than a quarter of the total fine, he found, was being levied upon the same village that had been driven to selling its women and its children to meet the savage fine of only a few months before.

The villagers crowded to him, beseeching his intervention to secure a remission. As they pleaded for his assistance, one of their spokesmen, a strong man of heroic build, broke down and sobbed, declaring that their lives had become one unending misery to them all, and that they could see no possibility of escape except in death. Casement could say nothing to comfort them, beyond advising them to lay their case in all its details before the constituted authorities. He knew, better than they, that the fines had no legal sanction and could not even be justified as the verdict of any tribunal. Not even the Congo Budget would reveal their existence, for they were imposed and collected at the unimpeded will of any local trading official.

He could do nothing beyond recording with faithful scrutiny every story that he had been able to verify or confirm. And as he collected his notes for his report to the Foreign Office, he marshalled every piece of evidence he had gathered, and recorded his own emphatic declaration that even if any legal warrant could be shown to exist for such atrocities as he had witnessed, yet the fine that had been imposed was 'not only out of all proportion to the gravity of the offence committed, but was of so crushing a character as to preclude the possibility of its being acquitted by any reasonable or legitimate means that the community disposed of.'

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He had seen horrors enough already to justify a report that must have left all the Embassies aghast; yet he was only now at the fringe of the great rubber-producing areas. There had been no rubber worked among these starved and persecuted villages where the whole population was being oppressed to death by merely collecting food and fuel for the trading companies. Now, as he steamed up the Lulonga River, he was entering one of the most productive rubber districts of all King Leopold's domain, where the A.B.I.R. Company was reaping enormous profits from its trade.

Its own steamers plied along the river, carrying goods from Europe and bringing back to Bassankusu the india-rubber that

the natives were all harnessed to produce. The rubber was of the highest quality; its annual output in this single Concession, Casement reckoned, must be worth not less than £150,000. Less than fifty Europeans conducted the whole trade of the Concession, distributing in return for the rubber collected imports of cotton cloths, of cheap Sheffield cutlery and beads and salt.

There was a considerable import, he found, of cap-guns also, and the fact aroused his curiosity. Each 'factory,' he learned, was entitled to possess only twenty-five rifles, and there were only three 'factories' in the Concession. The number of guns imported was far in excess of the limitations laid down. It was an invidious task to inquire for what purpose these continual shipments of rifles and ammunition were needed. But there were some who cared little enough how much he learned.

'The only way to get rubber is to fight for it,' he was told quite frankly by one informant. 'The natives are paid thirty-five centimes per kilo, it is claimed, but that includes a large profit on the cloth; and the amount of rubber is controlled by the number of guns, and not by the number of bales of cloth.' There was no mystery about it. Every corporal going out to collect rubber at the usual intervals would be given a stated number of cartridges, and for every cartridge that had been used, he was required to bring back a right hand. There was no use disguising the truth, or being squeamish about it. Soldiers would hunt animals for their own amusement when they had guns and cartridges, and if ammunition were wasted in sport, they had discovered a very simple means of producing evidence to clear them from trouble. Hands could be cut from the living as well as from the dead.

Casement had heard often of the practice of such barbarities before he started on his mission, and he had already seen instances of it in the course of his investigations around Lake Mantumba. But even he was staggered by the statement freely supplied by one of his informants, now that he entered this rich centre of the rubber territory. In six months on the Momboyo River alone, he learned, no less than six thousand cartridges

had been expended, which could only mean that six thousand native men had been either killed or mutilated within six months in that one area. The facts were worse than it appeared, he was assured; for it was common knowledge that besides killing men, the soldiers were addicted to killing children with the butts of their rifles.

His informants had grown so accustomed to savage methods that scarcely anything could still move them to horror. Things had been worse in some respects, he was reminded, before King Leopold had assumed jurisdiction over the Congo State. Casement himself knew, better than most, what the earlier conditions had been like. He had seen with his own eyes on the Lulonga River, less than twenty years before, the gangs of captives who had been seized by cannibal tribes for sale in the slave markets of the region. He could remember one day, when he had been travelling through the Congo in his vagrant youth, how a woman had been killed in the village which he was passing through, and he had seen her head and other portions of her brought and offered for sale to cannibals among the crew of the steamer on which he travelled.

Leopold's rule had at least put an end to horrors of that kind, and in his report to the Foreign Office, he duly noted now that 'full credit for their suppression must be given to the authorities of the Congo Government.' Yet in suppressing savagery, the Congo authorities had employed savages as their troops; and the fact of being the agents of a much stronger authority had apparently encouraged them to appalling atrocities. An official document shown to Casement during his tour revealed that so late as 1896, the chief executive officer of the Equator District had not hesitated to issue orders himself for the purchase of slaves. The Commandant's name was Sarrazyn, and he had left so lurid a reputation in the district that Casement found him still talked of everywhere among the natives by a nickname which was translated as 'Darkness.'

Excuses might be made for the first officers installing a new system of government in a savage country, where even cannibalism was still rampant. But the armed soldiery of a Concession

Company slaughtering natives by the thousand as a means of driving the rest to forced labour, without remonstrance, could claim no such excuse. And in a few days' travelling in King Leopold's domain, Casement reached an area where the conditions of government were almost inconceivably barbarous.

So long as a Concession was fertile, the task of collecting rubber was simple enough. Armed raids and occasional massacres could reduce the people to abject servitude, and until the rubber plantations became exhausted, there would be no serious trouble in maintaining supplies. But the La Lulunga Company was now exploiting whatever could be extracted from a Concession that had previously been worked hard by two larger companies. Here only the most inhuman slave-driving could make the collection of rubber profitable to the capitalists who had taken it over. Casement found at once that here everything depended upon a rigorous intimidation by the 'forest guards,' whose brutalities went completely unpunished.

Once again he began his thankless task of inquiring by what authority the Company could expect to justify their employment of armed men. The traders cursed him and told him angrily that the guards were needed to protect the 'factory.' When he pointed out that the guards were quartered in large numbers in every native village, they told him that the collection of taxes had to be enforced. But Casement knew, as well as they, that the forced levies were not even supposed to be taxes collected for the Government, and were simply imposed by the trading company for its own profit. Each new explanation contradicted the last. The supreme mockery was the pretence that the native population were entirely free men selling their produce freely to a European company.

Being master of his own movements, with his privately chartered steam launch, he went on at once to explore off the main river where the regular steamers passed. No rumour of his coming had preceded him as he steamed up a small tributary of the Lulonga and arrived at a little village along its banks. He had learned enough to expect the presence of armed guards in every village, and the first sight he saw was two sentries in

charge of an open shed. He could see at once that they were mounting guard over a group of fifteen women, five of them with babies at their breasts, while three others were obviously about to become mothers.

He spoke to the principal sentry, who had a double-barrelled shot-gun in his hand, and a belt of cartridges. The sentry did not wait to be catechised, and volunteered an explanation. He had been ordered by the Company's agent to watch over these women, who were being kept as hostages. There had been a dispute between two villages, he explained, which had already cost the life of one man, and four of the women had been taken as hostages until the chief of the other village came in to arrange a settlement. Was it not much better, he asked Casement, to arrange matters in this peaceful way, than to have the matter fought out between the two villages? As for the eleven other women, he had caught them himself, and was keeping them so as to compel their husbands to bring in the right amount of rubber on the next market day.

Casement replied that he thought it was men, not women, who were expected to collect rubber, and he asked why the women should be detained. The sentry, thinking him surprisingly stupid, answered that if he arrested the men, no rubber could be collected, whereas the men were now working hard in order to get back their wives. If they did not bring in the rubber, he explained, the women would of course be detained indefinitely. He had arranged for feeding them, as he compelled the chief of the town where they were imprisoned to provide what they required. The system worked well; it saved much trouble, and even loss of life. It was not his own idea to detain women in this way; he was ordered to do it by his employers.

The sentries, it was easy enough to see, were the undisputed rulers of the village. They were most ready to be obliging, and Casement soon found that all his own needs had to be met under their authority. Even when he bought a few fowls, the money had to be paid through them as intermediaries. When he asked for fuel the obliging sentry, with his gun over his shoulder, marshalled a procession of men, with the village

chief at their head, to carry down each a bundle of firewood to the steam launch. Nor would he allow the natives to speak freely to Casement, when he desired to interview them; he stood by and answered many of the questions for them. And when Casement inquired whether they caught fish in the river for themselves, the sentry asserted himself at once and answered: 'They have no time for that, they have to get the rubber I tell them to.'

Casement could learn little by interrogating them in the evening under such conditions. But what he saw made questioning unnecessary. At nightfall he went out to see what happened to the women prisoners. When he arrived at the open shed where he had seen them during the day, he found them secured for the night. They were tied together, neck to neck or ankle to ankle, trying to huddle around a fire. He looked at them and went away in horror. Later he came back again, and he saw the helpless creatures tied together, the mothers with their infants and the pregnant women all huddled in weariness and despair on the bare ground.

He had heard the senior sentry ordering his colleagues to keep a close watch over them during the night; and now the senior sentry had gone. He had imagined that Casement was a missionary, but his suspicions had been aroused, and he had hurried back to the station to inform his employer that a strange white man was in the village.

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More than a month had passed since Casement had set out from Stanley Pool, and the time for returning had nearly come. But he lost not a day as the sweltering month of August dragged through, going on up river, calling at likely places here and there, gathering impressions, questioning every one with the same calm scrutiny of evidence. Each day brought some new revelation of horrors to be added to his report, while he noted every detail that could be of service either for the accusers or the accused. He recorded the 'kindness and hospitality' with which he was received by the Company's agents, on the same

page of his diary that described the 'rubber market' where he had seen the processions of natives marched in with their loads of rubber by armed guards.

At Bougadanga, where he was so kindly received in the well-built houses of the lonely European traders, he was still taking notes of the great tree-trunks, some of them weighing nearly a ton, which had been cut and carried in by natives to build a new European house. Everywhere there was the same sight of soldiers armed with rifles or shot-guns mounting guard over gangs of labouring natives; everywhere evidence of periods of detention for those who failed to bring in their full quota. Everywhere there were signs of such 'trade' as the concessionaires thought worth while. Knives, machetes, beads, a little salt, were the recognised prizes for those who worked diligently and brought in full weight. What profits were made upon these dealings with an unenlightened people! Did any other people labour with such fierce industry for such pitiful rewards?

Visiting the homes of those who lived inland from the beaten tracks, he watched the rubber workers marched off under armed escort for a two days' journey to the outskirts of the forest. There they would toil among the swamps for days, searching for good rubber vines in districts which had been worked over time after time. They knew that if they delayed in their work, there would be fierce penalties to incur. They would come back worn out, carrying in a sovereign's worth of rubber every week, to receive payment at the rate of less than sixpence for their toil. Even in the local markets the goods that they received in barter would not fetch more than double the paltry price they had cost the company that paid them out. And day after day would come fresh evidence of mutilations or of murder by the soldiery, whose only idea of their duties was to punish by the most primitive methods every native who proved recalcitrant.

September came, and a few days before his mission reached its end, he had seen the elderly headmen of a village near Bougadanga setting out in canoes to find meat as the ransom with which they hoped to get back their wives. One of them

had come piteously in with his infant child to implore that it should be restored to its mother, as it must otherwise die through not being fed. Casement and the local missionary had interceded and obtained what he asked; and Casement had announced there and then that he intended to expose the whole system of detaining women to compel their husbands to work. The local traders had resented his attitude fiercely; they had assured him that their own station was conducted more leniently than almost any other in all the territory exploited by the A.B.I.R. That the system was prevalent, Casement had known before he started on his journey. That there were places worse than what he had seen was scarcely credible.

On the same day, as he steamed down the Lopori and Lulongo Rivers, he was waited upon by natives where he halted for the night, who brought with them the lad whose right hand was amputated. They lived on the other side of the river, a few miles away, and they complained that the same soldier, employed by the La Lulunga Company, who had cut off the boy's hand, had shot dead one of the chief men of their town. The boy was crippled also, and according to his story, had been shot by the same sentry in his shoulder-blade. He had fallen senseless, and as he lay the sentry had cut off his right hand. Another boy, younger than he, had been similarly mutilated a few months before; they would have brought him, too, but the sentry was still quartered in the village and had threatened to kill the boy if they took him with them.

They implored Casement to come back and see the truth of what they alleged. Worn out as he was, Casement responded to their appeal and arranged to accompany them. He had no notion of what a flood of revelations his decision was to bring before him.

As he was preparing to start next morning, he was delayed by the arrival of a large deputation from another village. They had brought with them two men and a very small boy who had all been shockingly wounded by gun-fire, and another small boy whose right hand had been cut off at the wrist. Once more

Casement had to produce his note-book, and record the details of their appalling story.

It was the familiar description of an armed raid upon the village to enforce the rubber tax. One of the men had been tied up by two 'forest guards' and threatened with shooting unless the village produced a fine of one thousand rods. There had been no means of paying it, and the man had been shot through the arm, and left where he was, tied up. The chief had arrived upon the scene, implored their mercy, and had been shot dead for daring to interfere. The whole deputation confirmed the story, giving the names of the injured and of the guards who were employees of the La Lulanga Company.

Casement could only take down their details to add to his already immense dossier of evidence. While he was concluding his business another deputation entered – two men from another neighbouring village, who brought with them a young man whose arm was shattered and hideously swollen by the discharge of a shot-gun, and a small boy whose left arm was broken in two places by two separate gunshots, so that the wrist was shattered and the hand wobbled helplessly from his arm. Once again a long story had to be recorded – this time of a guard who had behaved brutally because they had failed to bring their rubber to him personally and to pay him a commission on it.

Deputation after deputation followed, from other villages along the river, until Casement's promised journey to investigate the first village had to be delayed as the morning wore on. One deputation came to report the murder of their village chief. To Casement's inquiry why they had lodged no complaint before the tribunal, there was only the blank answer that no hope of redress lay there. The next complained bitterly that they had been forcibly transported across the river, after fifty of their women had been first kidnapped so that they should follow. The women had only been released on payment of a fine of ten thousand brass rods; and they had immediately afterwards been again ordered to move their village and to build themselves a new town close to the factory.

Once again Casement asked why they did not complain to the Commissary. The answer of the chief had been to open his mouth wide and show his broken teeth, explaining that this had been the only recognition he had received when he had last complained. Another of them told how, when he had pleaded inability to assist as a porter and had offered to provide a substitute, his house had been burned down with all his belongings, and he had been tied up for days and only released to assist in forced labour.

The tales of woe would have lasted until nightfall if Casement had not cut them short and proceeded according to his promise to see the mutilated boy up river. Travelling by canoe, and then on through a flooded forest, he came upon the accused sentry surrounded by the terrorised village. Before long the boy was brought in, wearing a dirty rag wrapped round his wrist. Casement removed it, and could see at once how the hand had been hacked off, while a shot-hole still showed plainly in the flesh of the forearm. Determined to see the matter through Casement insisted on having the sentry brought before him, and in presence of the whole village he interrogated both the sentry and the boy. There could be no doubt whatever of the truth, and in a verbatim report Casement put the whole facts in an appendix to his report. Here at least he had been able to conduct a full judicial inquiry, and he learned soon afterwards that, acting upon his own request, the authorities had arrested the sentry and put him on his trial.

From far and near they were crowding round him, imploring him to visit their villages. But only a few days more remained. He could do no more than investigate one other case on the spot, where he found still more natives with their hands cut off. He had seen more than enough, and the strain of ten weeks of diligent inquiry in the blinding sun of the hottest season of the year had told upon him severely. He was counting the days until he could turn his back on all that hideous nightmare; and at last the day broke when he was to return downstream from Coquilhatville to Stanley Pool.

Even on the last night before he left he had been invaded

by more piteous appeals. A native, accompanied by some of his friends who were fleeing from their homes, came on to his steam launch to beg that they might come under Casement's protection as far as Lukolela. He had already travelled eighty miles by canoe, and was hiding with his friends in a village near by. What had driven him to final despair was the demand that his village should supply goats each month for the European houses. No goats or any other live stock had survived the constant demands of so many years of exactions. The only method by which the village could now furnish what was required was to pay three thousand rods for every goat, for which the company had agreed to pay only one hundred rods.

Casement urged him to proceed at once to Boma to appeal against an unjust imposition, but the journey was obviously beyond what he could accomplish. As for the local tribunal, he complained bitterly that on his last complaint he had been threatened with the 'chain gang' if he did not pay his taxes promptly. Casement could do nothing to help him, and when he reported the complaint at his next stopping place he was told that the man's story was quite true.

By that time he was already coasting rapidly downstream on the broad, muddy waters of the Congo. On 15th September he had arrived back at Stanley Pool.

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He had been ordered to lose no time in preparing his report and to bring it home with him to London. There was an enormous dossier to arrange and to digest, and the autumn found him working desperately to complete it. But at least it was to bring him a relaxation of that appalling strain. The liner carried him away from the fierce sunlight and the fever-ridden swamps. He was on his way home, his mind still filled with ghastly pictures that would never leave his memory while he lived. Even his magnificent constitution and large frame were already taxed to their utmost limit by all that he had been through.

It was the first week in January when he arrived with his

report in London. In the first weeks of February, Lord Lansdowne, after full deliberation, decided to circulate it to all the Powers that were parties to the Act of Berlin. Since September the provocative letter from the Belgian Government had remained unanswered. Now the answer was forthcoming in earnest, and its repercussions were to be felt all over the civilised world. Lord Lansdowne's formal reply conveyed an intimation that Mr. Casement's report of his personal investigations was being forwarded to His Majesty's representatives at Paris, Berlin, Vienna, St. Petersburg, Rome, Madrid, Constantinople, Brussels, The Hague, Copenhagen, Stockholm, and Lisbon.

A covering memorandum, that was to be submitted to the Belgian Government by the Ambassador in Brussels, explained that the British Government had delayed its reply until Mr. Casement had completed and reported on his inquiries. 'The descriptions given in the report,' it added, 'of the manner in which the administration is carried on and the methods by which the revenue is collected in the districts visited by Mr. Casement constitute a grave indictment, and need no comment beyond the statement that, in the opinion of His Majesty's Government, they show that the allegations to which reference is made in the dispatch were not without foundation, and that there is ample ground for the belief that there are, at any rate, extensive regions in which the pledges given under the Berlin Act have not been fulfilled.

'M. de Cuvelier's note dwells at considerable length upon the necessity of the natives contributing by some form of taxation to the requirements of the State, and upon the advantage of their being induced to work. The history of the development of the British Colonies and Protectorates in Africa shows that His Majesty's Government has always admitted this necessity. Defects of administration of the character referred to in M. de Cuvelier's note are, no doubt, always liable to occur in dealing with uncivilised races inhabiting vast areas and differing in manners, in customs, and in all the attributes which are necessary for the construction of a social system. But whenever difficulties

have arisen, most notably in the case of the Sierra Leone insurrection of which M. de Cuvelier makes special mention, prompt and searching inquiry has been publicly made, redress of grievances has been granted where due, and every endeavour has been made to establish such considerate treatment of the natives as is compatible with the just requirements of the State.'

Memoranda, the document added, would be forwarded separately, giving examples of injuries suffered by British subjects, which had been the cause of complaint. These memoranda 'had been prepared in order to confirm the statement, upon which M. de Cuvelier throws doubt, that the time of His Majesty's Consul had been principally occupied in the investigation of such cases.'

PART II

THE PUTUMAYO

'I have often wondered since how much exaggeration there was in his revelations about the Congo and the Putumayo. . . . A few days before his execution he received a telegram from the person who had been most injured by his statement about Putumayo, imploring him at that solemn moment to retract his unjust charges. As far as I know, he did not reply to this telegram.' — SIR BASIL THOMSON² on 'The Casement Case.'

THE PUTUMAYO

HAD it not been for the insulting tone with which the Belgians had incautiously attempted to retaliate upon the British Government, Lord Lansdowne might not have published the amazing record of Roger Casement's investigation. But the Belgians had asked for it, and the retribution was swift and devastating. In February the report in its entirety was published and distributed broadcast to the chancelleries. The storm that it aroused went far beyond even the anticipations of Casement's excitable temperament.

Sir Charles Dilke and Mr. Fox Bourne, ably assisted by the prolific pen of Mr. E. D. Morel, redoubled their efforts in a campaign to enlighten and arouse public opinion throughout the country. Before long the redoubtable support of W. T. Stead and of Dr. Clifford had been won to their side. Dr. Grattan Guinness, the head of one of the missions in the Congo, undertook to tour the country delivering lectures on his own experiences as an eye-witness; and in March, at a large meeting in Liverpool, presided over by Mr. Alfred Emmott, M.P., the Congo Reform Association was brought into being. Lord Beauchamp became its President, and a long list of Members of Parliament, peers, and bishops, gave their names and their influential support to its committee.

Roger Casement had sprung suddenly from the position of an obscure member of the consular service in West Africa into a prominence that attracted world-wide attention. He was being consulted by Cabinet Ministers, sought after by the most famous publicists and social reformers of his time; and in the diplomatic world he had won a reputation which placed him in the front rank. In the honours list of the following year he received a C.M.G.

Barely ten years had passed since he had accepted his first position in the Government service as a Travelling Commissioner, after wandering vaguely through Central Africa as a young adventurer. His experience as an explorer, his knowledge of native languages and customs, and not least his powerful physique, had seemed to offer him a fair prospect of constant employment in places where few would dare to live. But now, almost overnight, he had become one of the most distinguished members of the consular service.

He need no longer expect that his whole life would have to be spent in tropical countries until even his strong constitution broke down under the strain. There were few men indeed of his qualifications, and fewer still with his diplomatic gifts available for the more responsible positions under the British Government.

How the world had changed since the young vagrant had left the glens of Antrim nearly twenty years before to seek his fortune with a shipping company in Liverpool, determined at all costs to avoid entering the Civil Service and longing to get clear away from the crowded, monotonous existence of industrial cities. Yet now he was a Civil Servant, thrown into the centre of the political world in London. Even in Downing Street and Whitehall the most secret doors were constantly being opened for him, in consultation on affairs of incalculable importance.

The storm over his report grew more intense as the months passed. Casement had become one of the pillars of British diplomacy. The old King of the Belgians was mobilising forces of every kind to discredit him and to cast suspicion upon his work. He was denounced as the tool of British Protestantism, attempting to discredit a great Catholic State. Cardinals and bishops were brought into the fray against him, and Catholic missionaries were brought forward to testify that they had made great progress in the countries where he asserted that Leopold was creating a hell upon earth. Above all, he was decried as the paid agent of British trading interests which had cast covetous eyes upon the Congo rubber plantations.

In America especially every prejudice against English com-

mercial ambitions was exploited. In the light of after events it is particularly curious to recall the fierce attacks upon him delivered by the Irish-American organs which were afterwards to make the utmost use of his reputation as the champion of the oppressed natives in Africa. 'ENGLISH WANT CONGO TRADE,' for instance, was the large headline that figured over four columns of denunciation of him by the *Irish World* in the following January. The character of the denunciation is sufficiently indicated by the headlines that followed underneath: 'So they have instituted a disgraceful and lying campaign against the Belgian administration – Bogus "Congo Reform Association" – Backed by English Traders – Bribery used to obtain false testimony against Congo State – Congo natives better off than any natives under English rule.'

The fury of these continuing onslaughts only increased Roger Casement's reputation and prestige in Whitehall. They intensified his own determination to pursue the attack upon King Leopold, until the old monarch had been compelled to relinquish his autocratic control over territory which had brought him enormous wealth and power. A diplomatic career such as he never dreamed of lay before him if he chose to use his opportunities.

He had earned a long vacation during which he could recuperate his health after the strain he had been through. He went back to his own country and hid himself in the glens of County Antrim among the peasant people whose gentle, friendly ways recalled all the happiest memories of his youth. His energies were still absorbed in the fight with King Leopold, and he was in almost daily communication with E. D. Morel and his friends in the Congo Reform Association. He was providing them with more evidence and encouraging them to bring an unrelenting pressure to bear upon the Foreign Office, where the influences that the old King could still mobilise were already producing a relaxation of effort which filled Casement with disillusion.

He had been granted long leave, and there was no need for him to take up further duties while his services were

constantly in demand for consultation with Whitehall. But as the months passed and he saw the campaign gradually subsiding, he determined that he would consider no new offer of any appointment elsewhere until he had seen the fight through to its end. Before long he was definitely invited to become His Majesty's Consul at Lisbon. But he declined the offer, although he knew well that he was rejecting an invitation that was a marked compliment to his work in the Congo.

He 'seconded himself,' and faced the prospect of months without salary of any kind in order to be free to assist Morel and his friends. In the meantime the old associations of his youth in County Antrim surrounded him with an appeal that he had never realised before. In the remote and lonely countryside, under its dreamy skies with its gentle sunlight and its soft rains, he found a peace for which his soul craved, and he grew to love the life of the people round him as he had never loved it before. His sudden rise to fame had thrilled his old friends and his family; and as he thought of the future years, wondering where next his nomadic life would lead him, he dreamed of a life of service to the simple people of his own country, to whom he was scarcely even a name.

He had been caught into the full tide of world-politics; and from that new perspective he began to consider the position of Ireland in relation to the world. His family had all been staunch upholders of the Protestant ascendancy and of the administration of Ireland by British authority, which they had been brought not so many generations back to maintain. But his own vagrant life had detached him from the traditions of his youth, and he asked himself why the native people of Ireland should have been dispossessed, and why they should be condemned to a life of such hopeless poverty, compelled to emigrate to America or other distant countries if they had any ambition to improve their position.

In the general election of 1906 the Conservatives were swept out of office in a landslide that brought into power all the Liberal and Radical politicians who had taken a most active interest in Casement's efforts to expose abuses on the Congo.

Dilke was a member of the new Cabinet, Herbert Samuel and Alfred Emmott and many of his particular allies were included in the Government. In the new regime at the Foreign Office under Sir Edward Grey he was certain to receive rapid promotion and to be marked out for large responsibilities.

Political excitement had begun to rise quickly again in Ireland since the advent of the new Liberal Government had dashed the hopes of obtaining Home Rule as soon as the Conservatives were displaced. The enormous Liberal majority in the House of Commons had no further reason to cultivate the Irish Nationalists as allies. They made no effort to redeem the old pledges of their party to give Ireland self-government. A passionate reaction of disillusion had set in, and by accident Casement was to be brought in touch with the pioneers of a new nationalist revival that looked to self-reliance in Ireland for the accomplishment of self-government. The Gaelic League and the cultural revival of the Irish language and of Irish industries was in full tide.

In County Antrim, when he was home on leave, there was being organised an ambitious festival called the 'Féis of the Glens,' where competitions in Gaelic singing and dancing, and exhibitions of Irish handicrafts, were being held. His neighbour, Miss Ada McNeill, was one of its chief promoters; another was Francis Biggar, the antiquarian of Belfast. With them, there was the historian, Mrs. J. R. Green, who had met Casement in London, with Mr. Haldane and her other friends among the Liberal politicians, and who had become his most devoted admirer. They brought with them, as a distinguished visitor, the tall shy man with his black beard, and his air of a mediæval adventurer, who still bore the haunted look that his Congo expedition had left upon him. They were all Ulster men and women, in revolt against the traditions of Protestant Ulster, and encouraging the younger men who seemed to have inherited that fierce reaction against Ulster Loyalism which had inspired the vitriolic nationalism of John Mitchel in the years of the great famine. They were all enthusiastic for the new doctrines of Sinn Féin, with its scorn for Westminster as a source of

redress for Irish wrongs, and its determination to discourage every form of Anglicisation in Ireland.

One phase of the new agitation had begun to loom large in the newspapers. The younger Nationalists were coming into direct conflict with the Government by their open campaign to discourage recruiting for the British Army. Their programme was at once logical and complete, and it appealed with an overwhelming conviction to Casement's mind. To promote economic development in Ireland, in order to stop the continual drain of emigration; to make the country self-supporting and self-reliant; to encourage a love for its native traditions, its history, and its language; to create in Ireland a self-contained community living its own life, aloof from the trend of modern industrialism, and detached from the ambitions and the complications of Imperial politics – such was the ideal that captivated Roger Casement as it captivated all the more visionary spirits among the new generation.

He loathed cities and he loved primitive peoples, and here among his own people he had discovered, as a returning wanderer, not only the same unspoilt simplicity of life and manners, but the same effects of misgovernment and confiscation that had stirred his mind and given a purpose to his labours in Africa.

He was happier than he had ever been before. He would spend days in long walks with young men who were working for the new campaign in Ireland, encouraging them with his own hopefulness and his experience, and promising them assistance in the long fight that lay before them. He read their newspapers and their pamphlets, and he began to write for them under various pseudonyms, saying the same things that they were saying, with a vigour and a self-confidence that they had not yet learned. He shared to the full their hatred of Imperialism as a philosophy of politics, and he vowed that one day, when he could retire and settle down in Ireland among the valleys and the fields that he had grown to love, he would devote himself entirely to assisting them. In the meantime, he was ready to do everything that lay in his power. He approved completely of

their efforts to keep young Irishmen from joining the British Army. He even assisted in writing a pamphlet against recruiting, collaborating with Mrs. J. R. Green and his young friend Bulmer Hobson.

From time to time offers of other consular appointments were suggested to him, but he would take none of them. 'I was then so well occupied in Ireland trying to keep Irishmen out of the British Army,' he wrote in his diary eight years afterwards, 'and in dreaming of an Ireland that might yet be free, that I gave no second thought to that after-dinner suggestion' (made to him by a friend of Lord MacDonnell's at Mrs. Green's house) 'any more than to a later one of Sir Eric Barrington that "Stockholm was vacant, and might be offered me."' I was immersed in Irish affairs all through 1905 and right up to the very day of my departure for Santos in August 1906. It was those nineteen months in Ireland, when seconded from the consular service, that moulded all my subsequent actions and carried me so far on the road to Mitchel's aspirations that everything I have since done seems but the natural upgrowth from the seed then sown.'

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But the old wanderlust stirred in him with increasing urgency. Sir Edward Grey was not mistaken in believing that the investigator of the Congo would not refuse indefinitely some other offer of employment that might be made to him, where he could fill positions in tropical countries that required a rare combination of activity and experience. He was still in his early forties, and there were wide tracts of the world that he had never seen. Above all, there were questions concerning the rubber trade in which it was vitally important that some experienced agent should be available for the British Foreign Office. For an adventurer who had travelled far and wide through the forests and the marshes of the Congo, there were regions of South America along the Equator where the fecundity and the luxuriance of nature was even more majestic, and where the lives of the native peoples were being jeopardised by modern trade.

A vacancy had arisen at Santos, the capital of the State of San Paulo, and one of the chief ports of Brazil, some three or four hundred miles below Rio de Janeiro. If Casement would accept the appointment, the climate seemed more likely to suit him than Lisbon, and there would be the prospect of rapid promotion in that immense country until he should become Consul-General in Rio. He was too young to contemplate retirement, and his small private means had been exhausted by his long stay in Ireland as a freelance. He accepted the offer; and saying good-bye to his Irish friends, he set out again, this time across the Atlantic, with a new world before him – little dreaming that he was at the outset of another stage in his diplomatic career which was to make him more famous even than his investigations on the Congo. For a year he was at work at Santos, and then he was transferred north to a station almost on the line of the Equator, at the mouth of the Amazon River, where, wide as an inland sea, it emerges on the Atlantic.

It was at the beginning of December 1907 that he was appointed Consul in the port of Para, where the liners sail in from Europe at the mouth of the longest river in the world. As the year passed he grew more acutely aware of the emergence of a new controversy concerning the rubber trade which recalled the worst atrocities of the Congo under Leopold's administration. Tales of the massacres of Indians who were being exploited as rubber slaves at the other side of South America were becoming more frequent and more circumstantial in their detail. Sensational articles, pamphlets and speeches, were denouncing the regime on the boundaries of Peru and of Colombia with an insistence that called imperatively for an official investigation. As he watched the big river steamers sweeping down the Amazon with their cargoes of rubber, destined for the European markets, he could conjure up a picture of what scenes of torture and oppression had been enacted in the territories from which they came.

There was one firm particularly against which the accusations were being made more and more frequently, and at last *Truth* published a detailed exposure which contained such

circumstantial descriptions of atrocities and of depravity that even Casement, with his ghastly experience, could scarcely believe them to be true. The firm in question was of Peruvian origin, and had originally traded under the title of Arana Brothers. More recently it had transferred its headquarters to London, where it had become the Peruvian Amazon Company. As such, its activities became of immediate concern to the British Foreign Office, and the fact that circumstantial accusations against its agents involved the rights and the conduct of a number of British subjects, imported from the West Indies for employment in the district, compelled the Foreign Office to take official cognizance of the charges that had been made.

Not quite a whole year had elapsed since Casement had been appointed Consul at Para, when his promotion as Consul-General at Rio was announced. He was then forty-five, and he had reached one of the highest positions in the whole consular service. The promotion involved a change to much more spacious and comfortable quarters in one of the great cities of the new world. But he knew well that his own career still called him to adventurous fields. The agitation over the ill-treatment of natives along the higher course of the River Amazon was rising to a height which must soon require the appointment of an investigator with unique experience and prestige.

Casement was recalled to London for consultation, and in July 1910 formal instructions were issued to him from the Foreign Office, informing him that he was to proceed at once to the Putumayo district, at the other side of the vast continent, to accompany a commission of inquiry which had been appointed by the Peruvian Amazon Company 'to report on the possibilities of commercial development of the company's properties, and to inquire into the present relations between the native employees and the agents of the company.' His instructions were that he was to travel to the district either independently or with the Commission according to his own discretion, but that he was to be present with the Commission throughout its tour of the Putumayo region.

'While in that district,' his instructions continued, 'you will

endeavour to ascertain whether any British subjects have suffered or are in distress, and if so, from what causes, and whether they stand in need of relief. You should also report in a separate dispatch any facts which may come to your knowledge in the course of your inquiry in regard to the methods of rubber collection and the treatment of natives by the employees of the Company in the district which you visit. You will, of course, be careful to abstain during your investigation from any action that would be likely to cause offence or annoyance to the Governments of the countries visited. As regards the means of travelling you may decide to adopt, and the actual methods you may employ for eliciting information, Sir E. Grey has decided to allow you complete discretion and freedom of action, and you are authorised to incur any necessary or unavoidable expenditure and to take whatever steps you may deem essential, within the limits of your functions, to enable you to arrive at an independent and impartial conclusion as to the relations obtaining between British subjects in those regions and the Company's agents.'

So the call had come again. For months the increasing number of details concerning the ill-treatment of natives in the remote and inaccessible territories that lay on the fringe of three republics, had brought back the horrible memories that had been seared upon his mind by his mission through the Congo. Now he would have to face the same ordeal all over again. He was no longer blessed with a constitution unimpaired by fevers. The long voyage of more than three thousand miles up river along the line of the Equator would tell fiercely upon him even before he reached his destination. But the stories that he had read inflamed his mind with all the old hatred of oppression. He faced the task with unflinching courage, and with real confidence in his own ability to expose whatever wrongs were being committed by this new brand of commercial adventurers.

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Longer and wider even than the muddy Congo, the vast sluggish waters of the Amazon flow out into the Atlantic through

an estuary hundreds of miles wide, from the mountains of Ecuador and Peru across the continent. The steamer had to cover nearly a thousand miles before reaching the river junction at Manaos, where at last it begins to assume the proportions of a river rather than of an unending flowing lake. The confluence of one great tributary after another was passed on the way, as they steamed on through the endless expanse of swamps and forests and luxuriant undergrowth, under a broiling sun. There was still more than another thousand miles to cover before they would arrive at Iquitos, which was to be the starting point of the expedition.

The Commission appointed by the Peruvian Amazon Company had sailed from Lisbon, and Casement had joined them on the steamer that was to cross the Continent. The chief member was Colonel the Hon. R. N. Bertie, C.B., but it was soon evident that his health would not stand the strain. By the time they reached Manaos, the doctors told him that it was useless for him to proceed farther, and he was sent home, leaving the others to travel on to Iquitos with Roger Casement. Mr. L. H. Barnes, a distinguished expert on tropical agriculture, took Colonel Bertie's place as leader of the Commission. The other members were Mr. W. Fox, a rubber expert and botanist, Mr. E. S. Bell, a merchant, and Mr. H. K. Gielgud, the secretary and manager of the Company.

It was a journey very few Europeans had ever made. On the Putumayo River, with its length of six or seven hundred miles from its source in the mountains below the gulf of Panama, it was very seldom that any vessel ever penetrated, except the steamers belonging to the Peruvian Amazon Company. The wide district that takes its name from the river is drained chiefly by its two tributaries, the Igaraparaná and the Caraparaná; and the rubber region is roughly bounded by the frontiers of Colombia on the north, Ecuador on the west, Peru on the south, and Brazil on the east. Occasionally steamers belonging to either the Peruvian or the Brazilian Government would make their way up one or other of the vast swampy rivers that drain the immense territory which lies between them. But even those

who knew most of the Putumayo district could form no conjecture as to the extent of the native population in the unfathomable forests and swamps that stretched on every side.

All that was known, more or less, was that the native Indians must be concentrated chiefly in the upper and the middle courses of the river, for the ground rises to some six hundred feet above sea-level around La Chorrera. It was scarcely conceivable that human beings could survive for long in the forests and swamps of the lower river, which merges in the sluggish waters of the meandering Amazon, through hundreds of square miles of low-lying country, continually flooded in the rainy seasons. There the swarms of mosquitoes and sandflies made it impossible for even the most hardy Indian races to live.

Not even the most enterprising and tireless missionaries had penetrated into that impassable and fever-ridden country. Earlier settlers from Colombia had apparently come down to the upper reaches of the river and had at least introduced Christian worship; but they had never gone farther down to the lands inhabited by the native tribes, whose only contact with the outer world had been the experience of spasmodic raids for slaves from other tribes. Even that adventurous British naval officer, Lieutenant Maw, who had traversed the whole continent from the Pacific to the Atlantic, by following the tributaries of the Amazon till he emerged on the great river, in 1827, had formed no clear notion of what sort of people inhabited the Putumayo region.

Not until the first Colombian 'caucheros' descended upon the district from the upper reaches of the Caraparaná and the Igaraparaná in the 'eighties in search of rubber, was it thrown open in any degree to the incursions of modern traders. They found in abundance what they came for; and though the rubber was of an inferior kind, there was more of it than they had ever dreamed of, to be had for the slightest effort at organised labour in the dense unending forests on either side of the two tributary rivers. The new 'conquistadores' arrived with a plentiful equipment of arms and ammunition. They soon taught

the Indian tribes to gash the trees with their machetes, to catch the milk that exudes from the bark, in primitive baskets made from leaves, and then to wash it in the running streams and pound it with wooden pestles into long sausage-shaped rolls, which they were to bring into the market for sale to the white men. It had been easy enough to induce them to undertake the slight effort that such operations involved at first. They had offered the natives payment in knives, and powder, and guns, in beads and mirrors and tin bowls and basins and tinned foods.

It was the same story, though of more recent date, as the growth of the rubber trade on the Congo; but the Indians were even more remote from civilisation and less accessible to any sort of supervision over those who set out to exploit their labour. The territory in which they lived was still a No Man's Land, to which three of the South American Republics jealously laid claim, though none of them had undertaken any serious attempt to explore the nature of the country and its people.

Even to the white inhabitants of the surrounding equatorial countries the climate was so intolerable that there could be no question of any protracted settlement. The 'conquistadores' came with the intention of remaining for as short a period as possible, while they extracted the maximum of booty they could win from the untapped natural resources of the region, by a rigorous enrolment of every Indian labourer they could find. Again and again some ambitious adventurer would plan an expedition with that object. Accompanied by a contingent of hired 'rationales,' or half-breeds, they would make their way into the forest region in search of natives, who could be quickly brought into subjugation and induced to work the wild rubber trees by tempting offers of new articles of ornament or of food. It was soon discovered that the authority of the native chiefs was remarkably strong, and that if the chiefs could be persuaded to undertake labour, the tribes could be kept together in a state of intimidation.

The Colombian adventurers had arrived in the region at the time when Casement, as little more than a boy, was taking

part in his first exploring expedition in the Congo. In time a large number of their settlements had grown up among the forests along the upper reaches of the various rivers. Four principal tribes composed the greater part of the native population of perhaps some fifty thousand who were known to live in the more accessible districts. Much the most numerous were the Huitotos (pronounced Witotos), the other three most important tribes were the Boras, the Andokes, and the Ocainas.

Their colour was dark-brown rather than black; and when Casement came among them he was struck at once by their Mongolian or distinctly Asiatic look, in contrast with the negroid Africans of the Congo. 'A picture of a Sea Dyak of Borneo,' he wrote in his report, 'using his sumpitan or blowpipe, might very well stand for an actual presentment of a Boras Indian with the "cerbatana." The weapons, too, are identical in structure and use, and in several respects a striking similarity prevails between two races so widely sundered.' Among the tribes there were apparently long-standing feuds, which led to many 'wars.' The wars caused surprisingly little bloodshed, but the victors were usually cannibalistic enough to eat their prisoners. The native ideas on the subject were curious; among some of them it was regarded as an honourable end to be eaten. Their weapons of offence were not calculated to cause casualties on any great scale. They consisted either of blowpipes, which were used to fire poisoned darts, or else throwing-spears with wooden heads, that were so light that three or more would be held between the fingers at the same time.

It was among these defenceless and scarcely human tribes that the trading adventurers from Colombia had discovered the possibility of producing inferior rubber on an enormous scale. In practice, they found it was much easier to dispose of the rubber by sending it southwards along the rivers that gave access to Brazil and Peru than to send it back through their own fever-ridden country. Within ten years they had established the beginnings of a rapidly expanding rubber trade, and about the year 1896 the Peruvian firm of Arana Brothers undertook systematic trade dealing with the Colombian pioneers. Before

long they bought out the rights of almost all the settlements, and within a few years practically the entire rubber production of the region had become concentrated in their hands.

They took over not only the trading establishments of the first settlers, but, as a matter of course, the Indians whose services the settlers had conscripted. The general system which had resulted by the time when Roger Casement came to conduct his investigations was that 'men descend or ascend a hitherto untested river, establish themselves on its banks, reduce the forest tribe or tribes to work for them on their terms, and henceforth that river and those Indians become the close preserve, jealously guarded, of the first adventurer. Any attempt to ascend that river by another is regarded as "piracy" while to enter into friendly relations with the Indians is a capital offence, and those attempting it must go with their lives in their hands. "Rubber pirates" are shot at sight, while "thefts" of Indians involve bloody reprisals and private wars, that recall the feudal conflicts of the middle ages. An Indian tribe, once conquered, becomes the exclusive property of the successful assailant, and this lawless claim is recognised as a right over a widely extended region which is not limited to the Putumayo district alone.'

Here, indeed, had been discovered opportunities for avarice and unscrupulous extortion such as scarcely any other part of the accessible world at the dawn of the twentieth century could offer – unlimited forests of wild rubber trees at the time when the world's demand for rubber was increasing by leaps and bounds; virgin country, where the rivalries of the three republics that laid claim to it made it extremely improbable that any settled system of law would be enforced for years to come. It was a situation in comparison with which even the Congo was orderly and civilised; for there at least there was a recognised European ruler who was personally responsible under a solemn international covenant for the territories which had been entrusted to him.

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That abuses similar to those Casement had seen on the

Congo had already become prevalent throughout the Putumayo district was already generally known. He set out on his expedition prepared to face the worst. It brought back all the long nightmare of his earlier mission, as he looked out upon the wide sluggish river that flowed on for hundreds and hundreds of miles as the steamer had made its way upstream under the scorching sun. He had seen more than enough of horrors and of obscenities. But the inarticulate, agonising call of the defenceless for his protection gripped him mercilessly again; and he went knowing that he must once more plunge deep into the 'heart of darkness.'

At least he came now with a prestige such as he had altogether lacked when he undertook that ghastly journey through King Leopold's domain. Report what he might this time, there was no fear that his word would be disbelieved. But the prospect of spending months more in the swamps and the forests in the height of summer was a nightmare in itself. The malarial fevers which had affected him so lightly in his youth kept on returning, and left him liable to constant recurrences of illness.

Yet the old love of exploration for its own sake was still in his heart, and he turned his mind from horrors as far as he could during the daytime, while he watched from the steamer the tremendous river, stretching on and on interminably as he followed its course through the blinding sunlight. He had left England at the beginning of the last week of July, and he reached Iquitos in company with the Commission, on the last day of August. There, where the boundaries of Peru and of Ecuador are little more than an arbitrary line ruled across the map, he waited for a fortnight before the expedition started on 14th September. The *Liberal*, one of the steamships of the Peruvian Company which plied regularly between Iquitos and the Putumayo rubber territory, took them on to La Chorrera, the chief marketing centre of the industry, and there at the outset of the mission they were met by the two representatives of the Company. For several days they halted at Chorrera, while Casement conducted his inquiries among the coloured

British subjects from Barbados whom he found at the station.

He had expected horrors, and believed that he was embarking on a last crusade which was to expose to all civilised peoples the atrocities that he was certain must be taking place among the natives whom he had never yet seen. And even at Iquitos he found confirmation of his lurid expectations, among the Barbados men whose evidence was to form the chief substance of his report. Some two hundred of them had come out to the Putumayo on contracts for two years' service about six years before, in the service of the Arana Brothers. Though most of them had since returned to their homes, Casement found about a dozen of them still in Iquitos working in various capacities. Some of them had quite recently returned from the Putumayo district, and it was Casement's chief business to discover and interrogate every one of them he could find.

He found some of them at once on his arrival, and what they told him was more startlingly horrible than anything he had anticipated. When the river steamer *Liberal* came in, he found that its crew also included a few more of them, and from them also he took down detailed statements as the steamer went on its way. While they were still waiting at Iquitos he had already decided to engage one of the Barbados men as his own personal guide and servant for the expedition; and the evidence of this particular negro was to provide one of the most amazing documents in his report.

A British Consul had been recently appointed at Iquitos, and had been instructed to bring to Casement's particular attention the names of any of the original Barbados men who were still in the town. He found that only three days before Casement's arrival two of them, by name Frederick Bishop and Nellis Walker, had just landed at Iquitos on their way back from the Putumayo. They had been working there in the rubber plantations under their original contracts for a period of fully five years. Frederick Bishop was brought at once to see Casement at the Consulate. Both the Consul and Mr. Barnes, the leader of the investigating Commission, were present at his

first interview, and its result was so startling that Casement requested the entire Commission to attend for the evidence to be repeated in their presence.

Before many days had passed they were to realise that Bishop's story was typical of practically all the rest. In the spring of 1905 he had arrived as one of a party recruited in Barbados. He had been sent straight to the Putumayo with the necessary equipment of arms, to undertake his work of compelling the natives of the region to cut rubber from the forest trees. His duty was to see that each of them brought in his specified quota of rubber; if any of them attempted to escape into the forest he was to be sent out with other armed servants of the Company to search for them. He had found at once that the natives were not treated as paid employees of the Company. The mere fact of their being in the district made them slaves of the Company; if they did not bring in rubber they were flogged or put in chains in the 'cepo,' or stocks.

To Casement the procedure sounded familiar enough from his experience of the Congo; but he had yet to learn the nature both of the floggings and of the stocks, which were the regular means in the Putumayo of enforcing labour upon the naked savages of the district. Bishop himself, he was scarcely surprised to learn, had administered floggings on various occasions; and though the negro confessed he did not like doing it, he protested that there was no use thinking that a man could assert his own feelings when he entered the employment of the Company. His description of the floggings, however, was more than Casement had been prepared to hear. Some of the Indians, Bishop informed the Commission, would lie down meekly to receive their floggings, but others would require force to make them submit. In such cases it would be necessary to hold them down flat on the ground by their arms and legs; and not infrequently the simple expedient would be adopted of pegging them down with stakes so that there need be no trouble from their resisting. All the Indian women were entirely naked, and the men wore only a loin cloth of twisted bark-cloth; and they

would be flogged on their bare buttocks. They would often be left cut and bleeding. But to prevent their being incapacitated from work, their wounds would be treated with vinegar or salt.

Even Casement, after steeling his nerves for weeks in preparation for what he knew he would have to hear and see, was appalled by the coloured man's account of other things he had done under orders. He knew what a mockery the system of payment for labour on the Congo had been – how even the silly brass rods had been cut down in length so that the merchants might earn a slightly bigger profit on the system of barter by which they exchanged pence for pounds. But here, on the Putumayo, witnesses who had no reason to exaggerate their own misdeeds assured him that scarcely any pretence at payment to the conscript natives was attempted. Every two or three months the more industrious of them would be paid with cloth or axes or knives; if they worked with extraordinary energy an Indian might be given a shot-gun.

But they were not even fed when they went out into the forests to slash the rubber trees. At the stations some pretence at feeding them would be made; but it all depended on luck whether they got full rations of their primitive food, or whether they were left hungry. Many of them, Bishop asserted, were half starved. In the Atenas section, from which he had quite recently come, he declared that the native rubber-workers were literally starving. The place contained no food supplies; their own plantations had been abandoned through the impossibility of working them as well as collecting rubber day after day. Less rubber was being got there than before, and the natives were unable to work through starvation.

One white man, he said, was the chief cause of the present appalling conditions. His name was Elias Martinengui, and he had left the district on the boat before Bishop himself had come down. His time was through, and he had been determined to make all the money he could before retiring. He was paid, like all the others, a percentage on what he made the natives bring in, and he had driven his slaves remorselessly without regard to what would happen for his successor in the same district.

Such was the lurid account of the first witness Casement examined. He catechised the negro as fully as he could. Had he ever known cases, Casement asked, of natives being killed when they were backward in working rubber? Bishop answered unhesitatingly in the affirmative. In his first year on the Putumayo he had seen two Indians killed for trying to run away. They had been pursued and captured, and their heads had been cut off with machetes by order of the same Señor Martinengui. And quite recently – in the present year – he had seen another of the Company's agents, Señor Montt, at Ultimo Retiro, himself take four Indians out of the stocks, and send them off into the forest in chains, escorted by two confidential muchachos. A few days later, Bishop himself had been passing through the forest in the same direction, and he had found four bodies lying there in such a state of stinking decomposition that he had been obliged to walk far round them. He had not the slightest doubt as to their identity; and he had himself seen the two confidential men coming back that same evening with the chains that had tied the prisoners. There had been other cases, too; he could recall an Indian girl, for instance, who, everybody knew, had been shot after being kept in the stocks because she had tried to run away.

If half what this young Barbados man said were true there could be little doubt that the complaints and protests that had been reaching the British authorities were abundantly justified. Casement showed the young negro extracts from a letter that had been received at Montserrat, from a British subject who had sent in appalling descriptions of ill-treatment. Bishop knew the man at once, recognising the names of nearly every one mentioned in the complaint, and he gave circumstantial evidence concerning one of them particularly, another Barbados negro – and British subject – named Dyall.

Dyall, he said, had been accused of improper relations with an Indian woman who was kept by one of the white men at Ultimo Retiro, and had been put in the stocks for punishment. By Bishop's account the stocks were much more barbarous than anything Casement had known on the Congo. In Dyall's

case, the leg-holes of the stocks had been so small that they had to be forced down on his legs until he shrieked with pain. They had cut right into his ankles, but there had been no mitigation of his punishment. On the contrary he had been turned over after a time and made to lie face downwards all through the night, crying and groaning with his legs mercilessly impaled. He had been released on the following day, so injured that he could not walk, and had to crawl back on all fours to his house. Even then he had been chained up by his neck and brutally lifted in that way from the ground, so that his feet only just touched the floor.

Here indeed was matter that required the attention of a British Consul. By Bishop's account, what had happened to Dyall was only a sample of practices common all over the Putumayo district. He himself, he said, had been put 'into guns,' though only for a few hours, for having tried to run away. Casement asked if he would face going back, to show up the people whom he had denounced; and when Casement promised him full protection, the Commission were amazed at finding that he agreed at once. He was sick of the whole system, he said, and had made up his mind to leave. There were Indians even now, he believed, who could be induced to tell the truth; though most of them would not dare make the slightest complaint. Attempts had been made before by white men to investigate complaints; but everything had been hushed up and the European officials of the Company had been kept carefully in the dark whenever they arrived on tours of inspection.

This challenge to his own resourcefulness as an investigator spurred Casement to unflagging efforts. He decided there and then that he would employ Bishop as his own guide, and see how much he could discover.

After Bishop had been made to repeat his entire evidence in the presence of the Commission, Casement catechised him further in the presence of the British Consul. When asked if he could throw any light on the incredible complaints – in *Truth* and elsewhere – of Indians having been burned alive, he said at

once that he had heard similar stories. Such things, he declared, happened constantly without the knowledge of the chief agent at Chorrera. He ridiculed the idea that the officials had any real power, even when they got knowledge of what was taking place. The Indians were for all practical purposes the property of the Company's agents, no less than the rubber trees were; they did just what they pleased with them – and their pleasure took forms which only an incredible depravity could inspire. The record of Elias Martinengui, for instance, seemed to be inhuman beyond all belief. But Casement was to learn of worse malefactors before the month had passed.

Before he had yet started up river, Casement was to be confronted with the following appalling evidence: 'This same Martinengui, Bishop said, was a brute, and he then related an incident he had been an eyewitness of. Martinengui had an Indian girl – one of several – he kept, and one night when with her he discovered that she was sick with venereal disease – so he said. So in the morning he had her tied up and flogged in the station yard, and then made one of the young Indians – Bishop called him "an Indian boy" – insert burning firebrands into her body. Bishop did not like to say where, but indicated with his hand. I said, "Did you actually see that?" and he replied, "Yes, sir, I saw that done with my own eyes. That girl nearly died, but she got better in the end. She is at Occidente now." (This is one of the sections in the Chorrera division.) I then asked, "What did the Indian boy do after being forced to perform such an act?" Bishop answered, "That boy ran away, sir; we never saw him again."

'Bishop said that, as to flogging, it was done in many ways. One of the approved ways was to cut a tree off about eight feet from the ground with a flat top, and then cut a wedge, V-shaped, into the tree. This became a whipping post. A chain was passed round the neck of the victim, male or female, man, woman, or child, and they were dragged up, with their feet off the ground, by the chain being pulled through the wedge and made taut. He had seen lots of Indians flogged like this, and sometimes they would, when released, fall back like people dead. Once he saw

an Indian man or youth thus flogged who fell back so violently, hitting his head on the ground, that he bit his tongue clean through. This flogging is done at all the sections nearly.

‘Asked how he, a decent enough man, who knew the difference between right and wrong, could have stayed on so long among such scenes, and himself aiding the malefactors, he said it was all for money; that he wanted to have some money before he came out.’

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While they were still waiting, other Barbados men were found, and Casement interrogated them all. They were all young men in their twenties or early thirties. Their stories varied according to the employment that they had found since coming to the country. Almost every one of them had complaints of having been flogged or otherwise maltreated at some time or other, but their personal grievances were of minor importance. It was the stories of what they had seen when working in the rubber plantation that concerned Casement. The grievances of a few British subjects were to provide the pretext for a full investigation into the whole condition of the rubber trade. And even among these stray survivors of the original contingent who had come from Barbados, he found an overwhelming weight of testimony which made him vow that he would never return alive until he had searched the most remote and hidden places.

Just before the *Liberal* had started upstream, he found another witness whose evidence would fill the world with horror. Adolfus Gibbs was the name of this young Barbadian. He had come to the Amazon country when he was eighteen years of age, and had been there now for six years. Interviewed by Casement in the presence of another member of the Commission, he explained how, after having various other employments, he had volunteered, in the expectation of making more money, to work in the Putumayo district. His first work had been around Chorrera, and then he had moved on to the Abisinia section, where Abelardo Aguero had been in charge. There had been great difficulty in inducing him to appear before

the Commission, but when he came, the evidence that he had to give was enough to make any man's blood run cold.

"Some of his countrymen were going, and they told him he could get better money there, so he engaged himself to go at £5 per month. His contract is lost. He went to "look out for Indians." It was in 1908. He went first to La Chorrera, and then was sent to Abisinia. Abelardo Agüero was the chief of Abisinia. He was put on "general work," and often on "commissions" to see after the Indians. Sometimes twenty men went; sometimes ten – always armed with Winchesters. They would go out under a headman to gather the Indians together, and bring them into the station with rubber. If the Indians did not come willingly, they were chained up. Indians would be hung up with their hands tied behind them, or with a chain round their neck. Simon Angülo, a Colombian, "a coloured fellow like himself," would flog the Indians in Abisinia. He himself never did flog them; he was not ordered to, but he saw it done. It was done in the station itself, in the yard. Indians were tied up and flogged; he did not see them tied to a tree, but laid on the ground and flogged.

'In Morelia, the section under Abisinia, where Jiménez was the chief, he saw a man's head cut off. An Indian was in chains there. He was thin and sick. He got out of the "cepo," or stocks, and was running away with the chain on him; Jiménez sent a boy, a "muchacho," a young man about eighteen, after him to catch him, and he overtook him and brought him back. The boy cut his head off with a "sword" – a machete. Jiménez stood by and ordered it, and the boy cut the other Indian's head off against a tree-stump. The murdered man was a young man, too; he was a cacique or headman of the Boras Indians. He and his men had escaped, but he had been caught and brought back, and put in chains and in the "cepo," and not fed properly – so he was weak when he tried to escape and get away. He had been about three weeks in chains.

'He saw two old Indian women flogged at Morelia, badly flogged, and cut and bleeding. They had pulled up some sweet potatoes because they were hungry. The Indians get nothing to

eat; they are driven for rubber, and are flogged if they don't bring it. They are just slaves. He came back to Iquitos on the 29th July. His last section was Morelia, where he was sick for seven months. He got no medicine, and a little starch mixed with water for food. (He means cassava meal or farinha).

'There is a man, a Barbadian, now with Normand at Matanzas, named Leavine. Leavine came from Barbados before him; he knows how the Indians have been treated. He has seen it all, he is a small chap. He saw many people flogged. Señor Jiménez and Señor Macedo, in July, when he was at La Chorrera and wanted to come away, struck him in the face because he would not stay and go to another station. He was ill and sick, and said he would not stay, but must go to Iquitos, so they beat him, and at first tried to keep him.'

Next day the *Liberal* started upstream. Having ascertained that four of the original Barbados contingent were among the crew, Casement counted upon taking their evidence while the steamer was on its voyage. Not until he had gone on board did he learn that two of them had deserted that morning to avoid being catechised. But there was one of them whom he examined when they had been journeying for some days. Stanley Lewis was his name, and Casement recognised at once that here before him was one of the men who had actually been referred to in Mr. Hardenburg's sensational exposures of the Putumayo atrocities in *Truth*, under the name 'Estan Luiz.' Casement had already summoned him twice to appear at the Consulate, but he had refused.

On board the steamer Casement was able to break down his reluctance to tell his story. There was reason enough for his timidity, for the *Truth* investigations had accused him of having flogged a native girl who was afterwards shot. When Casement confronted him with the evidence he already possessed, Lewis admitted the truth and told him a great deal more besides. He had been only fifteen when he had come from Barbados six years before. He had been armed with a Winchester rifle even then, however, when he and others employed by the Company to supervise the natives had been sent out armed, to see that

none of some hundred Indians entrusted to their supervision escaped.

He admitted the flogging of the girl Simona, but he protested that the girl was the only native he had ever flogged – even though he was put in the stocks and beaten by the official, José Fonseca, for refusing to flog others. Fonseca, he declared, had been an atrocious brute, who had flogged men, women and children, time after time staked to the ground, in their nakedness, until they had often died after flogging. Their wounds would often fester and become full of maggots, and the stench of their condition would sometimes become so unbearable that Fonseca would have them taken out into the forest to be shot – women as well as men. The Barbados boy himself had been ordered by Fonseca to kill an Indian who was being punished by detention in the cellar, or ‘black hole,’ of his house at Ultimo Retiro. He had been put in the stocks himself, and then kept in the same cellar for two days and nights, for refusing to shoot the native. He would have died, he said, from being left there without food or water, if a friend had not come secretly to give him sustenance.

Having won the young man’s confidence, Casement recalled him again to his cabin on the following day, and he supplemented his story with further details: ‘I have seen Indians killed for sport, tied up to trees, and shot at by Fonseca and the others,’ he said. ‘After they were drinking they would sometimes do this. They would take a man out of the “cepo,” and tie him to a tree, and shoot at him for a target. I have often seen Indians killed thus, and also shot after they have been flogged, and their flesh was rotten through maggots. Others I have seen killed by the “cholitos” – the small Indian boys being trained into “muchachos.” These boys were armed with machetes, and they would cut their heads off against the tree stumps. I once saw Fonseca do the following thing: He had an Indian nurse girl minding a child of his, a baby he had by one of his Indian women. This nurse was quite a young girl, and she was carrying the baby, and it picked up a leaf of tobacco and put it in its mouth. Fonseca came along just then, and because the baby

was crying and he saw why, he beat the girl with his fists, and when she was knocked about a lot and her mouth was cut, he sent her down to the river to wash, and then when she came up he drew his revolver and shot her, and one of his men, named Chicodiño' (a nickname – his right name was Orsavio or Miguel Rengifo), 'came out and drew his revolver and shot the girl too, and so they killed her. Her body was buried.

'Another thing there I saw was this Rengifo kill a girl. This was a girl that he had, and she was friends with me, too, and with several of us. She was sent by Rengifo to wash clothes, and she went to a stream in the forest where he had told her not to go; so he took his gun and shot her right through the back and belly, and she fell down and cried out, and lay there on the ground crying, and died. Both these things I saw with my own eyes, just as I saw Indians tied to the trees and shot at, or shot after they had been flogged or killed with machetes.'

From first to last, Casement wrote afterwards in his report, he had seen a good deal of this young witness. He had questioned him in presence of all the members of the Commission, and he had 'no doubt of his sincerity or of the truthfulness of his statements so far as his recollection held good.' Much that he said was to be confirmed in detail by other witnesses who had been present at the same time, and much more was borne out by the detailed cases reported by Hardenburg in his articles in *Truth*. He had been present, for instance, on one of the occasions which Hardenburg reported, when the heads of various Indians, whom Fonseca had sent his muchachos to kill, were brought in for his inspection wrapped up in leaves. Lewis had been there as a boy on that day, and he declared that he could remember Fonseca undoing the coverings with his own hands, taking up each head by its hair and laughing at the dead distorted features, naming each of them and then throwing the heads away.

The steamer had been plodding on day after day through the sweltering heat, and Casement knew that at Chorrera he would see some of the forest Indians. Already his mind was steeped in horrors and outrages, and he knew that much worse

might lie before him. In his investigation on the Congo, when his work had not yet attracted world-wide attention, he had been free to arrange his own movements, and his coming had not been heralded in advance. Now he was hampered considerably by his orders to keep closely in touch with the Peruvian Company's Commission, whose approach had spurred every station to put things in order. When the steamer arrived at Chorrera, he was to find at once how difficult it was going to be to make the witnesses tell what they knew. The first three Barbados men whom he found still employed there all spoke under an evident sense of fear, and they were exasperatingly reticent and non-committal in their replies. But Casement's patience and experience were not in vain. Even in the presence of the Company's chief representative, Señor Tizon, and of Mr. Barnes, the leader of the Commission, he was able to extract confessions from one of them which no expostulations by Señor Tizon could explain away.

James Chase was still in his early twenties and had come out to the Putumayo as a boy. His task, he admitted, had been to compel the Indians to work rubber by threats of shooting and flogging; and, in spite of Señor Tizon's interruptions, he insisted emphatically that not only in the early years, but in quite recent months, he had seen Indians flogged. He had seen them killed, too – sometimes by Barbados men – for failure to do all that was demanded of them. He had seen Indians shot by Fonseca, and he had seen others die from flogging, both in Ultimo Retiro and in Abisinia. He had seen them shot after being flogged, and shot without having been flogged. Even to-day in Abisinia, he insisted, conditions were no better than they had been before – unless within the last few weeks, in fear at the reported approach of white men coming to make inquiries, there had been a temporary cessation of cruelties. Time after time the Company's envoy attempted to shake the young man's evidence; but trembling with fear and with emotion he adhered to his story without the slightest modification.

Other witnesses came, too, and they only confirmed the same

story of floggings and murders; no efforts by the Company's agent could modify their testimony. And then, volunteering his attendance, there arrived a witness whose evidence was all the more amazing because it was a voluntary confession of having committed atrocious crimes.

The whole Commission were present when this new witness from Barbados was shown into the shaded room at Chorrera. Joshua Dyall was his name; he had been one of the original draft six years ago, and was able to give many of the names of those who had since died or gone home. He recalled how, on their first arrival at Andokes, they had found only a palm-thatched Indian hut, where they had spent the first night with eight armed men on guard outside. They had then cut posts and trees and dug holes and built a house; and when that was done they would be sent out with their rifles to look for Indians and try to catch them. The leaders of the expedition had ordered them to fire on any Indians whom they could not catch, and every man among them was given one hundred cartridges.

But it was not on such expeditions, but in cold blood, that he had shot Indians himself, under orders from the unspeakable Fonseca. The first was an Indian chained up in the stocks, and Fonseca had threatened Dyall with a big stick that he would smash his ribs if he did not shoot the Indian before his eyes. 'What had the Indian done?' Casement asked, while the Commission listened with horrified attention. The Indian had done nothing, Dyall answered; but Fonseca had taken his wife (her name was Cherichema); she was with Fonseca even now at Sabana, having borne him two children in the meantime.

The name of Fonseca had recurred so often that Casement could scarcely disbelieve any story of outrages committed under his orders or even by himself. But the name of Armando Normand, whom Dyall mentioned as the cause of the next murder that he had committed with his own hands, was to loom still more luridly in the ghastly picture that overwhelmed his mind with darkness in the following weeks.

It was little more than a year ago, and Dyall had been going

along the road with Normand in Andokes, when they met an Indian whom Normand attacked and threw on the ground. The story was incredible in its horror; but there were to be so many more instances of similar atrocities perpetrated by the same man that even Casement and the Commissioners were driven to believing even this. He had thrown the man on the ground, and Normand, in a fury of cruelty, had ordered the mulatto to smash him to death with a heavy stick. They had overpowered the naked Indian; and as he lay at their feet Norman had forced his legs open, while he commanded the mulatto to batter him between the legs till he was dead. 'What on earth had the Indian done to provoke such an outrage?' asked Casement; and he learned that the Indian's crime had been that he refused to walk any further and to carry the sack in which Normand's clothes were packed. It was a young man they had murdered in this way, a Boras Indian named Nairipa. It had happened about two miles on the Chorrera side of Atenas, and they had just thrown the body into the bush.

There were two more Indians whom he had killed; the Commission listened with silent amazement while Casement pursued his interrogation. One of them was an Indian boy whom he had killed last year out in the bush near Andokes, for attempting to run away when Dyall had ordered him to carry some loads of sugar cane. He had been told to shoot anyone who refused to obey orders, and he had shot the boy at once. The fourth murder had been an Indian in Andokes; here Normand himself had not only been present, but had assisted in the killing – holding the Indian's naked legs apart while he compelled Dyall to butcher him in the same way they had done before. That Indian had been a middle-aged man, and his crime had been that he had been unable to walk with a heavy load that he was ordered to carry. He had been in chains even while they were marching; and when Normand saw that he could not walk he had cursed the Indian and told him that he would see that he would never walk again.

It was incredible; but Dyall had volunteered his evidence,

and there was reason enough for his desire for vengeance. He was the man whose punishment in the stocks Bishop had already described; and Bishop himself was available, as Casement's chosen guide for the expedition, to confirm every detail of that story. The Commissioners could see, as Dyll stood before them, how his ankles were still mangled by the way in which the stocks had been forced down upon them, because he had tried to run away from the station where Alfredo Montt was chief. He had been lame ever since. His avowed purpose in coming to give evidence was revenge; and he spoke with such freedom and with so much bitterness that it would have been impossible to credit his evidence if it were not confirmed. He admitted with effrontery that his being put in the stocks was due to his own immoral conduct with native women. He challenged the Commission to confront him with the men whom he accused – and he gave the names of many witnesses to their crimes – so that he might convince them of the truth.

It was that challenge that carried conviction. And when Señor Tizon, the Company's representative, requested that no such confrontation should take place, and agreed to accept the evidence against Normand and Montt and Martinengui as proved, and to order their immediate dismissal, the last defences of the Company had fallen before Casement had yet even entered the rubber region.

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Casement's dark face had grown drawn and haggard. His whole being had become so immersed in this revolting exposure of corruption and savagery that he knew well that there would be no escape while life lasted. As he felt the aches and twinges of fever that had been brought back by the months he had already been travelling along the Amazon, he could realise that his own days were closely numbered. There would be little indeed of life left to him after he had seen this morbid business through to its end.

He had not yet landed anywhere among the forests of the Putumayo, but they were now steaming up the sluggish River

Igaraparaná towards the centre of all these atrocities. More and more testimony was being thrust upon them; and some of the witnesses from Barbados who had already given their evidence sent in requests that they might have opportunity of telling all that they knew. James Chase, for instance, reported that he had much more to say concerning the Abisinia district when he had been there recently; and Casement arranged accordingly for his examination in presence of the entire Commission and the Company's representative.

In May of the same year – only some four months ago – Chase now informed the Commission, he had been sent out on an expedition in search of fugitive Indians towards the Caqueta River. The expedition had been led by three Peruvians, their names being Vasquez, Blondel, and Ocampo. The others in the party had included eight Indian muchachos as well as Chase himself, every member of the party being armed with a Winchester rifle. They were to hunt for a number of Indians who had escaped, and particularly for one fugitive Indian chief named Katenere, who had been almost alone in the Putumayo in persevering in resistance to the exploiters. Katenere had not only escaped, but had succeeded in obtaining rifles, and with these he had armed a band of his own tribe, until he had become a real terror to the Peruvian rubber merchants. So the expedition which James Chase accompanied was intended to inspire terror in the hearts of all who dared to resist the jurisdiction of the white men.

It had set out from Morelia, and at the first Indian 'house' they encountered they had found eight Indians – five men and three women, whom they quickly overpowered. All the eight members of the household were tied up with ropes, their arms forced behind their backs, and they were compelled to march on in that way with the expedition. They came to another house, where they found four more Indians, this time one woman and three men. Vasquez was the leader of the expedition, and when he came to this second house he commanded one of the muchachos to cut off the woman's head at once. His order was obeyed, and the helpless woman was seized by the hair and

flung to the ground, while the young muchacho hacked her head off with repeated blows of his machete. Her body was left where it lay on the path, and then the expedition had gone on, with the three more Indians bound as prisoners like the rest. By this time they were approaching close to the house where Katenere was in hiding. About half an hour's march from the place where they knew the house to be, Vasquez ordered Ocampo and Chase and two of the muchachos to remain and mount guard over the bound prisoners, while he and the rest of the party went on to capture Katenere in his house. They had gone on, and in the evening when they came back they reported what had happened.

They had found Katenere himself with his wife, but the chief succeeded in escaping. His wife, however, had been captured, and Vasquez had stayed with her while he sent four of the armed muchachos on into the forest to reach the next house, where they were to seize the rifles that Katenere's men were believed to have. They had found the house and four Indians in it, whom they captured and tied with their hands behind their backs; but after a time the leader of the four muchachos, named Henrique, had released them (being a Boras Indian himself, like them), and ordered the other three muchachos to go on and find more prisoners. Henrique had then found an Indian girl, whom he tried to seize; but the Indians whom he had liberated protected her, and in the struggle Henrique had been killed.

So when the three muchachos returned, they found him dead, and the prisoners whom he had released fired at them, but without effect. Two of them were killed in the struggle that followed, and the other two were captured again. They went back to Katenere's house, where they found Vasquez waiting for them, with Katenere's wife as his prisoner. They stayed the night there, and next morning began their return journey, having collected by this time twelve Indian prisoners.

Vasquez led the party back through the forest towards Morelia, having lost the killed muchacho Henrique on his expedition. He was mad with rage, but he had captured

Katenere's wife, and he violated her publicly in revenge. They marched on; and before long they saw a small girl on the forest path who was believed to be a daughter of Katenere's by a previous wife. The child was terrified as she saw the Indians tied up and being marched along, and she began to cry as they came towards her. Vasquez knew at once that it was Katenere's child, for Katenere's wife said so and begged for mercy; whereupon the Peruvian ordered that the child's head be cut off, and the youngest of the muchachos, still only a boy, was told to cut off her head, which he did. Once again the small body was left lying in the path; and then, after another half-hour of marching, one of the women prisoners was unable to walk as fast as the rest. Vasquez cursed her, and commanded that her head also should be cut off by the same boy.

Yet another headless, bleeding body was left across the path, and the party hurried on, beginning to grow uneasy at the possibility of pursuit or ambush by Katenere and his followers. Another of the prisoners – this time a boy much smaller than the others – was found to be lagging behind and impeding the march. He was weak for lack of food, and worn out by having been bound for so long; but Vasquez ordered that he, too, should be beheaded. Once more the same boy muchacho performed his horrible task under the Peruvian's orders, seizing the helpless Indian boy by the hair and flinging him to the ground so that he could hack off his head.

Time was short and evening was drawing on, and fear drove the party faster, as they were still more than an hour's distance from Morelia. But the bloodlust of Vasquez was insatiable, and three more of the Indian prisoners – all of them men, faint with exhaustion and pain – were killed, because they could not keep up the pace. Vasquez shot one of them himself with his rifle, and the same boy muchacho who had murdered the others with his machete was made to shoot the other two. Their bodies also were left lying in the forest path – so near to the station itself that the sound of the shots was heard by the station hands, who were waiting for the party's return. Only five prisoners now remained, and Chase swore that there

had been a dozen when they had started towards home. He believed that the rest must have been killed on the road, in the same way as those whom he himself had seen murdered.

Of the five naked Indian prisoners three were grown men, one was a woman, and the fifth was a little child. Two of the men and Katenere's wife were put in the stocks when they reached Morelia, while the fourth was hung up by his neck with a chain round it. The chain was pulled taut over a beam in the roof of the house, so that the man's toes just rested on the ground; but he could not budge or even move his head. All night he was left suspended in this position, while the other three were left with their legs impaled in the stocks, and with chains round their necks. Only the child was left unchained to lie beside its mother, Katenere's wife. They had had no food on their long march through the forest, and they were left without food or water all night. That, Chase declared to the Commissioners, had happened only four months ago.

How much of it could be believed? At any rate, the whole Commission had heard the Barbados negro's story, and the efforts of the Company's representative to shake his evidence had been unavailing. It hampered Casement's movements to be obliged to accompany the Commission on their journey; but there was compensation in the fact that they also had heard the testimony of these Barbados men.

Chase, like all the others who volunteered statements, had his own reasons for wishing to expose his employers. He, too, had been put in the stocks; and by his own account he had been left there, under Fonseca's orders, through a whole night, alongside naked Indians who had been mercilessly flogged and whose bodies had begun to rot and stink from their wounds. Women and children had been flogged constantly under Fonseca's orders, he swore; and he had seen men and women die from the effects of flogging in every district of the Putumayo where he had worked.

He described one such case that he had seen in Abisinia, when an Indian had been taken out of the cepo to be flogged by Simon Angulo under Agüero's orders. Both his hands had been

pegged down to the ground as well as his legs, so that they might flog him easily, and he had received a great number of lashes as he lay there. He was covered with blood when the flogging ceased, and Chase had seen the floggers throw salt and water on his wounds. Then they had dragged him back bleeding to the cepo, where only one of his legs was impaled. For two days more the Indian had been left like that, and then he had been released from the cepo and thrown into the big cellar under the house where the rubber is stored. Nothing had ever been done about giving him food, and he had been kept alive only by the pity of the white men's employees, who gave him their own leavings. But in the morning, he had been found dead in the cellar.

Fonseca was the chief object of the Barbadian's loathing; and the stories Chase told the Commission about his actions at Ultimo Retiro were of inconceivable brutality. There was one Indian, he told them later – when the Commissioners were waiting to return home in early November – who had run away from the rubber working and had been caught and brought in as a prisoner. Fonseca had met him and told him that he was going to kill him, and the Indian had protested that he had done no harm; and his only offence had been that he had tried to run away from his work, and he could not be killed for that. But Fonseca had laughed in his face, and ordered him to be hung up by the neck with a chain drawn tight, and then after a time Fonseca had released him to be put in the stocks with one leg impaled. Fonseca himself had then gone down to the stocks where the terrified Indian lay prostrate. He had seized his other leg, and stooped down to pull off his loin cloth; and then with a heavy stick he had battered the exposed parts of his body ferociously until the man died.

There was no cruelty ever perpetrated by human depravity which had not been committed upon these defenceless Indians. The Commissioners had been driven from an attitude of sheer incredulity at first into being prepared to believe almost anything, as one witness after another testified to having seen the same occurrence, or a repetition of it.



PHOTOGRAPH OF HUITOTOS INDIANS AT ENTRE RIOS WITH A
BARBADOS NEGRO OVERSEER

To face p. 140

Fonseca had become an inhuman monster of cruelty, whose passion for inflicting torture had grown insatiable. He had a long rifle with which he would shoot Indians for his own amusement when he had put them in the stocks after flogging them. Sometimes he would shoot them in cold blood to gratify his passion for killing. Chase swore to one instance where he had seen Fonseca order a girl to be bandaged over her face so that even her mouth and nose were covered; and he had then made her walk blindfolded while he shot her with his rifle 'as a sport for his friends.' That had happened, Chase believed, within four or five days before his own departure from Ultimo Retiro, and he gave the names of half a dozen witnesses who had also been present, whom the Commission could catechise to test his own veracity.

Fonseca was not the only white man whom Chase denounced. Alfredo Montt, who had been second in command at Ultimo Retiro, and was now in charge at Atenas, had been one of those who were present when Fonseca had shot the blindfolded Indian girl for the amusement of his friends. There were endless stories from other witnesses about Montt himself. Another of the worst offenders was Aquilea Torres, who used to cut off the ears of living Indians for sport. He had made Chase lend him his knife for the purpose on one occasion, and Chase had seen him do it other times as well. There had been one day when Torres cut off a man's ears and then burnt his wife alive before his eyes. That had been in the Abisinia district.

Another of them was Juan Zellada, whom Chase had seen shoot a Huitoto Indian under the following circumstances: 'It was in the Boras country at a place called Gwarunes. The party had no food, and Zellada sent them to try to get food at a house belonging to an Indian named Gwatipa, and this man or boy stole some sardines from a box of stores in Gwatipa's house, and he was killed by Zellada for this. With regard to Armando Blondel, now second chief under Aguero in Abisinia, he states he has frequently seen him brutally flogging the Indians, also hanging them up by chains round their throats so that they are almost suffocated. Sometimes they would be flogged before this and sometimes afterwards, and he has even seen them flog

Indians while actually in this position of torture. The last time he witnessed this was in August last (1910), about fifteen days before he left to come to Chorrera.'

Day after day dragged on as the Commission journeyed towards the Putumayo, collecting more and more of this revolting evidence. Every man of them had come to loathe his mission, and was counting the days until they could return. There were at least a dozen more of the Barbados men whom Casement would have to interrogate, to say nothing of the horrors they would find if they made any exploration off the beaten tracks.

Stanley Sealey, another Barbados man, gave evidence as revolting as any. It threw light particularly on the treatment of Indian women. He had been given women at various times by his employers as 'wives' while he was in each new district. But immoral relations with native women were regarded as a matter of course. It was the brutality with which women had been punished that had shocked this coloured man, even after six years of experience in the rubber country. They were captured and used as decoys when their husbands escaped; for the natives were devoted to their wives, and it was always certain that they would come back sooner or later to rescue them. And the women would often show heroism in refusing to give any indication where the men could be caught.

There was one incident that Sealey remembered when he and other Barbados men had been employed under Jiménez in Abisinia. They had been sent out on an expedition to round up Indians who had escaped, and when they were about a day and a half's march from the Caqueta they had caught an old Indian woman on the path. She was asked at once to say where the rest of the Indians were, and she told them to march on and they would find them. She was too old to run away, and they did not tie her up, but they made her walk with them until they had walked considerably further than she had led them to believe they would have to go. 'Where is the house of the Indians?' she had been asked by Jiménez, and the old woman, with her eyes on the ground, had refused to speak a word.

Jiménez had grown furious when he realised how his party

had been deceived, and he called to his own Indian 'wife' who accompanied him and ordered her to bring him the rope from his hammock. The rope was brought to him, and with it Jiménez bound the old woman's hands behind her back. He looked round and saw two trees standing close together. He made an Indian cut him a post that would stretch across between them, and when it had been put in position, he hauled the old woman up by her bound hands till her feet were clear of the ground. In a fury he shouted for dried leaves, and he made a pile of them himself under her feet, and then took a box of matches from his pocket and set the leaves alight under where the old Indian woman, stark naked, was dangling from the trees. The party had looked on in horror, and Sealey remembered how he had seen great blisters rise on her thighs while she yelled with pain. He had run away in terror, and where he hid he had heard Jiménez ordering after a time that she should be let down. Her cries had filled the hot air in the forest, and Sealey had heard him ordering that if she was not able to walk after having been burnt, her head was to be cut off.

So they had gone on in search of the fugitives, and they soon met two more women, one of them with a little child. Jiménez had made his servants hack off the child's head, and they had left it lying there in a pool of blood across the forest path, while the two women were dragged on crying pitifully. Later again they met a strong young Indian whom Jiménez asked, through his own native wife, where they could get a canoe. The young Indian had answered that he did not know, and Jiménez had sworn that he was a liar; and getting a rope and making a cross bar to stretch between two trees, he had hauled the defenceless young man up over it, with his hands tied behind his back, in the same way as he had murdered the old woman. With his own hands he had again lighted a fire of dried leaves under his feet, and the man had been left to burn to death in spite of his terrifying cries. Before he was yet dead, and when his head hung forward over his chest, Jiménez had ordered one of the Indian muchachos to shoot him.

Every one of these witnesses had been a British subject, and they were confessing to the most atrocious crimes perpetrated by themselves – floggings and killings and slave-raiding – as a description of the regular routine of their employment. There was Edward Crichlow, for instance, who had been employed chiefly as a carpenter, and who described how he had made a special cepo which Rodriguez had invented. It was fitted with holes at both ends, so as to hold the arms and head at one end and the legs at the other. The ends could slide up or down, so as to fit a victim of any size, from the biggest man to a small child; and the leg ends were so contrived that they could be expanded according to the degree of torture which was intended. The feet could be put so many holes apart; and he had himself been put in the cepo of his own making, after he had quarrelled with his employer, with his legs five holes apart, so that his legs were stretched wide all the night, while he was left there in chains. He had never been flogged himself; but he had flogged others under orders many times. He had seen little boys and girls flogged as well as women; and usually it was for no fault of their own, but as a means of forcing their parents or husbands to bring in more rubber.

There was no end to these stories of horror. As the Commission went further on, after visiting the stations of Occidente and Ultimo Retiro, examining more witnesses wherever they halted, they began to be confronted with the victims themselves. They were shown men with raw sores on their arms and legs, where they had been flogged only a few days before. The inquirers had known what to expect when they landed on the river-bank, and began to march across the forest through the infamous Normand's district on a surprise visit, and their expectations were fulfilled with terrible completeness.

Witnesses who had to be brought in by the issue of imperative orders, threatening dire penalties for refusal, confessed to having performed fearful crimes under Normand's orders. They admitted, without the slightest pretence at mitigation of their own offences, that Indian men and women had been deliberately left to starve to death in the stocks when they had failed to bring in

rubber. The dead and the living had been left in the stocks for days together, until the stench of decomposing bodies became insupportable. One witness, by name Leavine, swore that he had been present on the occasion when an Indian chief had been burnt alive in the presence of his wife and two children, and his wife had then been beheaded and the children dismembered and all thrown on the fire.

He recalled another day when Normand himself had cut a woman to pieces, only because she refused to live with one of his employees to whom he had given her. He had seen her when they had wrapped the Peruvian flag round her naked body, and soaked it in kerosene before they set it alight, and then shot her while the flames soared fiercely round her. The whole place had been so putrid with decaying bodies that it had become impossible for the men in the station to eat their food; the dogs had come day after day to eat the bodies and arms that were strewn about unburied.

Such sights, he averred, had been of common occurrence. He had himself seen twenty Indians killed within five days in Matanzas, and he was certain that Normand had killed hundreds of them during his six years in that district. Normand had invented all sorts of barbarous methods of killing them. Sometimes he would make them stand in a row and he would shoot the whole file of them dead with one shot from his own rifle. Sometimes he would have their hands and legs tied together, and then they would be flung on to a fire to be burned alive.

Speaking in broken English, contradicting themselves often, and then slowly and hesitatingly recalling the facts in greater detail, the Barbados men would come in day after day in the sweltering heat to give their evidence. Usually Casement would interrogate them alone, but the Commissioners would attend when Casement insisted that they should hear anything of special importance. The stories grew horribly monotonous. Only now and then would they convey some fleeting glimpse of despairing efforts made by the Indians to organise in a forlorn hope of resistance against their armed oppressors. But all such hopes had died long ago.

It was four years or more since the night when Jiménez had gone out and killed some thirty Indians – men and women indiscriminately – in the evening when he had heard of preparations being made for resistance: not that he had the slightest reason for fearing that it could possibly be effective. ‘About half-past eight I was on guard,’ said one of the Barbados men who told the story – and it was confirmed by half a dozen others later who had been present at the same time – ‘and I heard the Indians “telephoning,” as we call it – beating the big drum, the “manguaré” – and I told Jiménez that there was a drum beating in such a direction, and he called out to the interpreter – a boy named José Maria, a Boras, who is there now in Abisinia (he is an interpreter who speaks Spanish) and he told him, “Listen to the ‘manguaré’ to hear what it says.” And he went out and listens, and he comes and says that the “manguaré” says the Andokes is calling the Boras to come and help to kill us where we slept last night. And through that he told him to take all those Indians out of the “cepo” and have them killed. There was one man that didn’t die – an old fellow – and he took leaves and set fire to him, and he was burning and calling out. He was alive when they burnt him because he rolled about and called out. They cut his neck first, but he didn’t die then – not till he was in the fire. Jiménez did not set fire to the house because we slept there.’

That witness, by name James Mapp, had stories to tell that awakened even the hardened ears of the Commission. Some of them concerned the notorious agent Aguero, who was actually in the town where they were taking evidence. He had shot or beheaded many women as well as men, and at times, when he was drunk, he would shoot Indians for sport, going down to the stocks or the cellar where they had been confined and starved till they could hardly crawl, and he would order them out to be shot before his eyes. He would have their bodies burned after they had been killed – but there was some reason for doing that, as they were often in such a loathsome state from their constant floggings that it was intolerable to remain near them. Quite small boys would be made to shoot them as often as not.

His accusations did not spare even some of the Barbados men who had come with him to the Putumayo. One Barbadian boy particularly, who had since gone back home, had developed an appalling degree of brutality through being constantly employed in inflicting tortures. Mapp had seen this young negro torment Indians who had been suspended by ropes with their arms twisted behind their backs; he had bitten them as they swung from the trees, with Aguero looking on. There was one Indian, still living in that neighbourhood, whose toe had been bitten off that day when Mapp had seen it happen; his story had become known to others who had refused to believe it could be true.

A footnote to the evidence of this particular witness in Casement's report relates that he had expressed a desire to leave the district as soon as he could collect his native wife, who was going to have a baby. Accordingly he went down the river to a port called Providencia, from which he would still have to make a long march through the forest to collect his wife. The evidence given by all the Barbados men had been kept a close secret for fear of consequences to the witnesses, but those who were known to have seen Casement were already under suspicion. In this case Mapp was met by Aguero at the station, and told by him not to start until nightfall. He had waited; but before evening he had been warned by a Brazilian that a group of muchachos had been detailed to attack him and his companions after dark in the forest. He declined to go on, after being warned, and he came back to claim Casement's protection; and before the Commission returned home they had to arrange for having the witness and his family conveyed safely out of the country to Brazil. Mapp's testimony was certainly of a kind that would not easily be forgiven, and Aguero may well have suspected that it would affect his own reputation.

From another witness they heard casually how the redoubtable chief, Katenere, had been destroyed—less than twelve months before their own arrival. Many of the Barbados men had spoken of him; he was the one chief who had resisted to the

end. There had been repeated efforts to capture him after the raid in which Vasquez had, in his own words, 'left the road pretty' with Indian corpses, on the way back to Morelia from the unsuccessful attempt to surprise him in his house. The effort had by no means been a complete failure; for they had brought back the chief's wife in chains, and Vasquez had placed her in the stocks, where she was violated in public by the Company's agent as a supreme act of ignominy. They knew that Katenere would come sooner or later to try and get her back, and they had not simply waited for him to come. They left her at work out of doors in the plantation with a great chain round her neck and hooked to her feet, so that word should reach him as to where she was.

It was one of the Barbados men, Evelyn Batson, who had seen him when he did come as they had expected. From his room across the plantation, he had caught sight of an Indian standing on a tree-stump, and he had called two boys to look. They said they would go out to see what the Indian was doing, knowing that there were armed Indians in the neighbourhood. Batson had told them to go armed with his own rifle. He watched them walk out to where the naked figure was standing by the tree, and then a shot rang out; one of the boys had been wounded in the face. The other boy, with Batson's gun, fired at once, but he too was wounded by return fire, and the two boys came running back, calling out frantically that the man on the tree-stump was Katenere himself.

It was growing darker every minute, and the Barbadian had not dared to go out to fetch his rifle where the boy had dropped it. He carried the boy into the kitchen and laid him down, where he died a few minutes afterwards from a wound in his side. Not till the morning had Batson dared to go out, as the manager of the station was away at the time; and when morning came he went out with other men and they found the Indian lying dead where the boy had shot him before he had rushed back wounded.

They brought the dead Indian into the house, and it was then that he was recognised. They fetched his wife in chains

and she knew that it was Katenere, killed when he came in his last desperate effort to liberate her. 'What did they do with Katenere's body?' Casement asked; and he was told that Zellada had had the head cut off, and also the hands and the feet; they had then buried the corpse, throwing the hands and feet separately into the grave, after they had been brought round as an object-lesson to every one in the station. The head they had brought down to the river; and they had kept it under water so that it might still be recognisable when the manager of the station, the infamous Agüero, returned.

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For weeks the abominable ordeal continued; each day renewed the task of extorting confessions and admissions from the coloured witnesses. It had been scarcely even a relaxation when Casement had been able to land on the river-bank and march through the forest on his way to visit the Indians at their work. The first Indians he had seen were seven men of the Boras tribe from the Abisinia district, who had been brought down to Chorrera as porters. They were all stark naked except for a loin-cloth of beaten bark, the only form of dress known to them; their women-folk wore no covering of any kind.

The marks of flogging could not be concealed; and of the seven whom Casement saw at this first meeting with them, five bore marks of the lash – deep scars across their buttocks and thighs. When he went out into the forest and saw many others, the marks of flogging were even more apparent. 'All classes of the native population,' he wrote in his report, 'young as well as old – women and children, youths and girls, "caciques" or "capitanes" and their wives – were marked, some only lightly, others with broad and often terrible scars. Some of these marks were old, some quite recent; and in more than one case young men were brought to me with raw scars on their hinder parts with requests that I might give them some healing lotion. On one occasion, on the night of the 19th October, which I spent in a deserted Indian house in the forest with well over one hundred Andokes and Boras Indians around me, employed at

the time in carrying heavy loads of rubber from the station of Matanzas down to the River Igaraparaná, for shipment to La Chorrera (a march of some forty miles), I applied such healing medicines as I had with me to a dozen young men or boys who appealed for relief.

'The armed guards who were marching this caravan down to the river were mainly behind at a point in the forest some miles away, and only one or two armed "muchachos" were actually sleeping with the party where I, too, was resting. I was able, therefore, to inspect them closely, and many of the wounds were not yet healed. Some of the worst-marked were quite small boys – children of ten or twelve years of age as I should judge. I was told by a resident who had spent nearly six years in the region, and who himself confessed to me that he constantly flogged Indians – women as well as men – that fully ninety per cent. of the entire population bore traces of these floggings. I mentioned this figure to some of the English gentlemen who accompanied me throughout the greater part of the journey, and they thought it was an exaggeration. I am inclined to think it was approximately correct.

'The day this statement was made to me we were out at what was termed "an Indian house" in the forest of the section of Occidente, where the natives of that part had been ordered to get some crude rubber ready to be washed and pounded into "chorizos" for the inspection of the Commission of English gentlemen sent out by the Peruvian Amazon Company from London. I was present at this operation, and the limbs of the four Indian men actually employed in the washing were fully exposed to us as they stooped forward in the stream in their task. All four bore obvious scars across the buttocks – one of them, a middle-aged man, was deeply marked.

'I went from the stream up to the Indian house itself – one hundred yards away – where our lunch was being prepared, and finding eleven Indians of the district in the house who had come in to "compliment" us with small offerings of fruit, I took occasion to ask this assemblage, through my interpreter, how many of them had been flogged by the white men (who

were, at the time, my hosts), and they instantly replied, "All of us," and proceeded, as none of their local lords were in sight, to prove their words by exhibiting their scarred limbs. The only individual not marked in this gathering was a young boy of about twelve years of age. Thus, out of this haphazard gathering of fifteen persons of both sexes, a quite unpremeditated inquiry proved that all but one bore on their bodies the proof of the charges that were daily being brought to our attention, that in the production of Putumayo rubber the lash played an unceasing part.

'Flogging of the Indians had been prohibited some time before our visit, I was assured, by a circular letter sent out by the chief representative of the Company, and this gentleman, when I first arrived at La Chorrera, sought to convince me that it had actually ceased. From the direct testimony laid before me at the station of Matanzas on the 18th October, to which I invited this gentleman's attention, it was clear that in that district at any rate his orders had not been obeyed, for I there learned, by personal confession of one of the floggers himself, that less than six weeks before my visit, in the month of September, a native chief had been flogged to death, and had died in actual confinement in the station "stocks" between his wife and one of his children. Flogging was the least of the tortures inflicted on the failing rubber-gatherer, but it was the most universal and indiscriminate.

'Every section visited had its "cepo" or stocks and its duly appointed floggers-in-ordinary. At some of the stations the principal flogger was the station cook - two such men were directly named to me, and I ate the food they prepared, while many of their victims carried my baggage from station to station, and showed often terrible scars on their limbs inflicted at the hands of these men. Indians were often flogged while actually confined in the stocks, but this would be a sort of extra or gratuitous beating. The general method of flogging described to me by those who had themselves administered the lash was to apply it on the bare buttocks, the back and thighs coming in for a share of the blows, while the victim, male or

female, lay or was forcibly extended on the ground, sometimes pegged out. Needless to say, I did not witness any of these executions.

Before my visit ended, more than one Peruvian agent admitted to me that he had continually flogged Indians, and accused more than one of his fellow-agents by name of far greater crimes. In many cases the Indian rubber-worker – who knew roughly what quantity of rubber was expected of him – when he brought his load to be weighed, seeing that the needle of the balance did not touch the required spot, would throw himself face downwards on the ground, and in that posture await the inevitable blows. An individual who had taken part in these floggings, and who charged himself with two murders of Indians, has thus left on record the manner of flogging the Indians at stations he served. I quote this testimony, as this man's evidence, which was in my possession when I visited the region, was amply confirmed by one of the British subjects I examined, who had himself been charged in that evidence with flogging an Indian girl, whom the man in question had then shot, when her back after that flogging had putrefied, so that it became "full of maggots." He states in his evidence – and the assertion was frequently borne out by others I met and questioned:

“The Indian is so humble that, as soon as he sees that the needle of the scale does not mark the ten kilogrammes, he himself stretches out his hands and throws himself on the ground to receive punishment. Then the chief or a subordinate advances, bends down, takes the Indian by his hair, strikes him, raises his head, drops it face downwards on the ground, and after the face is beaten and kicked and covered with blood, the Indian is scourged.”

“This picture is true; detailed descriptions of floggings of this kind were again and again made to me by men who had been employed in the work. Indians were flogged not only for shortage in rubber, but still more grievously if they dared to run away from their houses, and by flight to a distant region, to escape altogether from the tasks laid upon them. Such flight

as this was counted a capital offence, and the fugitives, if captured, were as often tortured and put to death as brutally flogged. Expeditions were fitted out and carefully planned to track down and recover the fugitives, however far the flight might have been.

‘The undisputed territory of the neighbouring Republic of Colombia, lying to the north of the River Japurá (or Caquetá), was again and again violated in these pursuits, and the individuals captured were not always only Indians. Thus, in an expedition which set out from the station of Ultimo Retiro on the Upper Igaraparaná, in March 1910, and which was dispatched by the direct orders of the principal agent of the Company at La Chorrera (Señor Victor Macedo), the marauders were not content with capturing over a score of fugitive Indians in Colombia, but actually tied up and brought back to La Chorrera three white men, citizens of Colombia, who were found dwelling at the spot where the Indians were tracked down and overtaken. One of these men, by name Ramón Vargas, had consented to enter the service of the Company, and was actually employed at the station of Atenas at the date of my visit there on the 26th October. The other two men, named Mosqueiro and Tejo, after being brought to La Chorrera as prisoners, had been sent down-stream by Señor Macedo, and I could learn nothing of their ultimate disposal or fate.

‘This expedition had been led by the chief of Ultimo Retiro, Señor Augusto Jiménez, and two of the British subjects I encountered, natives of Barbados, named Edward Crichlow and Reuben Phillips, had formed part of it. A Peruvian named Eusebio Pinedo, who was one of the “racional” staff of the station of Entre Rios, which I visited after spending some days at Ultimo Retiro, at his own request made a statement to me covering his connection with this expedition. He bore out the evidence of the Barbados men, and added that two Indians, one a woman and the other a young man, had been wantonly shot by another member of the expedition, a man named Aquileo Torres. The two Barbados men claimed a special “gratification”

from the Company for their share in this raid, and cited in proof of their claim an order issued at the time the expedition was being organised by Señor Macedo, the representative of the Company.

'The original of this order signed by Señor Macedo I saw at Ultimo Retiro, and append the following translation of it:

' "NOTICE

' "The employés who conduct themselves well on the Expedition to the Caquetá, and who present a certificate on their return from the leader of the Expedition, Señor Augusto Jiménez, will receive a reward.

' "The Agent,

(Signed) ' "V. E. MACEDO.

' "Ultimo Retiro, 25th February 1910." "

'Both Crichlow and Phillips, the two British subjects concerned in it, obtained a gift of fifty soles (or £5) each for their part in this raid into the territory of a friendly State by the agents of a British trading company carrying on what were said to be commercial dealings in Peruvian territory. Much later raids than this were conducted into Colombia by the agent at Matanzas or Andokes, Señor Armando Normand, in which again two British subjects took part. The testimony of these two men, James Lane and Westerman Leavine, was first given to me at Matanzas station on the 18th October, and at once laid by me before Señor Tizon, the principal representative of the Peruvian Amazon Company, who accompanied me throughout my journey.

'Señor Normand, it was clear, from the evidence of these men and of others, had for years been engaged in hunting Indians who had fled across the Caquetá to escape from the inhuman cruelties he inflicted upon them in his efforts to make them work rubber for his profit. This man, by the official *Planillas de Sueldos*, or pay-sheet drawn up at La Chorrera in September

1910, to which I have already referred, received as remuneration from the company twenty per cent. on the gross output of rubber of his section ("20 por ciento sobre productos peso bruto").'

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In his report Casement was able to describe one of these forced marches to carry rubber from the distant places to Chorrera, which, on an average, took place three times a year. 'I witnessed one such march, on a small scale, when I accompanied a caravan of some two hundred Andokes and Boras Indians (men, women, and children) that left Matanzas station on the 19th October to carry their rubber that had been collected by them during the four or five preceding months down to a place on the banks of the Igaraparaná, named Puerto Peruano (Peruvian Port), whence it was to be conveyed in lighters towed by a steam launch down to La Chorrera. The distance from Matanzas to Puerto Peruano is one of some forty miles, or possibly more. The rubber had already been carried into Matanzas from different parts of the forest lying often ten or twelve hours' march away, so that the total journey forced upon each carrier was not less than sixty miles, and in some cases probably a longer one. The path to be followed was one of the worst imaginable – a fatiguing route for a good walker quite unburdened.

'For two days – that is to say, from Matanzas to Entre Rios – I marched along with this caravan of very unhappy individuals, men with huge loads of rubber weighing, I believe, sometimes up to seventy kilograms each, accompanied by their wives, also loaded with rubber, and their sons and daughters, down to quite tiny things that could do no more than carry a little cassava bread (prepared by the mothers before leaving their forest home) to serve as food for parents and children on this trying march. Armed "muchachos," with Winchesters, were scattered through the long column, and at the rear one of the "rationales" of Matanzas, a man named Adan Negrete, beat up the stragglers. Behind all, following a day later, came Señor Normand himself, with more armed "rationales," to see that

none fell out or slipped home, having shed their burdens of rubber on the way.

'On the second day I reached Entre Rios in the early afternoon, the bulk of the Indians having that morning started at 5.15 a.m. from the place where we had slept together in the forest. At 5.15 that evening they arrived with Negrete and the armed "muchachos" at Entre Rios, where I had determined to stay for some days. Instead of allowing these half-starved and weary people, after twelve hours' march staggering under crushing loads, to rest in this comparatively comfortable station of the Company, where a large rest-house and even food were available, Negrete drove them on into the forest beyond, where they were ordered to spend the night under guard of the "muchachos."

'This was done in order that a member of the Company's Commission (Mr. Walter Fox), who was at Entre Rios at the time along with myself, should not have an opportunity of seeing too closely the condition of these people – particularly I believe, that we should not be able to weigh the loads of rubber they were carrying. I had, however, seen enough on the road during the two days I accompanied the party alone to convince me of the cruelty they were subjected to, and I had even taken several photographs of those among them who were more deeply scarred with the lash.

'Several of the women had fallen out sick on the way, and five of them I had left provided for with food in a deserted Indian house in the forest, and had left an armed Barbados man to guard them until Señor Tizon, to whom I wrote, could reach the spot, following me from Matanzas a day later. An opportunity arose the next day to weigh one of these loads of rubber. A straggler, who had either fallen out or left Matanzas after the main party, came into Entre Rios, staggering under a load of rubber, about midday on the 21st October, when Mr. Fox and I were about to sit down to lunch. The man came through the hot sun across the station compound, and fell before our eyes at the foot of the ladder leading up to the veranda, where, with the chief of the section (Señor O'Donnell), we were sitting.

He had collapsed, and we got him carried into the shade and revived with whisky, and later on some soup and food from our own table. He was a young man of slight build, with very thin arms and legs, and his load of rubber by no means one of the largest I had seen actually being carried. I had it weighed there and then, and its weight was just fifty kilograms.

'This man had not a scrap of food with him. Owing to our intervention he was not forced to carry on this load, but was permitted the next day to go on to Puerto Peruano empty-handed in company with Señor Normand. I saw many of these people on their way back to their homes some days later after their loads had been put into the lighters at Puerto Peruano. They were returning footsore and utterly worn out through the station of Entre Rios on their way back to their scattered houses in the Andokes or Boras country. They had no food with them, and none was given to them at Entre Rios. I stopped many of them, and inspected the little woven string or skin bags they carry, and neither man nor woman had any food left. All that they had started with a week before had been already eaten, and for the last day or two they had been subsisting on roots and leaves and the berries of wild trees they had pulled down on the way.

'We found on our subsequent journey down to Puerto Peruano a few days later, many traces of where they had pulled down branches and even trees themselves in their search for something to stay the craving of hunger. In some places the path was blocked with the branches and creepers they had torn down in their search for food, and it was only when Señors Tizon and O'Donnell assured me that this was done by "Señor Normand's Indians" in their hungry desperation that I could believe it was not the work of wild animals.'

Dealing with the floggings of natives in his report, Casement could compare the practice with what he had seen on the Congo. The scourges used for flogging, he explained, were made of 'invariably a twisted strip, or several strips plaited together, of dried tapir hide, a skin not so thick as the hippopotamus hide I have seen used in Africa for flagellation, but still sufficiently

stout to cut a human body to pieces. One flogger told me the weapon he used was "as thick as your thumb." 'After the prohibition of flogging by circular,' his report continues, 'at some of the less brutal or more cautious centres of rubber collection, defaulting Indians were no longer during the later months of 1910 flogged with tapir hide, but were merely chastised with strokes of a machete. These machetes are almost swords, and shaped something like a cutlass. They are used for gashing the trees in tapping them for rubber milk, and they also serve as weapons in the hands of the Indians. Blows with these laid across the shoulder blades or back might be excessively painful, but would be unlikely to leave any permanent scar or traces of the beating.

'At the station of Occidente this form of beating had in June 1910 been varied with a very cowardly torture instituted by the chief of that section, a Peruvian named Fidel Velarde. This man, who was found in charge of that section when I visited it in October 1910, in order to still inspire terror and yet leave no trace on the bodies of his victims, since Occidente lay close to La Chorrera and might be visited unexpectedly by Señor Tizon, had devised a new method of punishment for those who did not bring in enough rubber to satisfy him. Their arms were tied behind their backs, and thus pinioned they were taken down to the river (the Igaraparaná) and forcibly held under water until they became insensible and half-drowned.

'During my stay at Occidente along with Señor Tizon and the Company's Commission, two chiefs (or "capitanes" as they are locally termed) of the surrounding Indians came at night to my interpreter and told him of this new procedure, and how an Indian had been quite recently drowned in this wise. They declared that two of their men had been drowned by this process, and not long before. I drew the attention of the Commissioners as of Señor Tizon to their statement, and begged that the two chiefs might be interrogated and steps taken to verify this accusation. Two of the Commissioners (Messrs. Barnes and Bell) questioned the Indians through my interpreter, and the matter was subsequently referred to Señor Tizon for fuller

inquiry. Señor Tizon employed as interpreter a "mestizo," and later on informed me that the charge of holding the Indians under water was, he believed, true, but that the death which had occurred had been due to an accident, the Indian having escaped from his captors and drowned "accidentally in the river."

'I was not satisfied with this result to the inquiry, and believed that Señor Tizon had been misled by faulty interpretation on the part of the half-caste. The matter, however, lay outside those things I was entitled to investigate, since no British employé of the company was, so far as I was aware, concerned in it, and I could do nothing more, although by no means satisfied that the truth had been fully stated.

'I learned later from one of my Barbados guides and interpreters that a fellow-countryman of his had actually been employed at Occidente at the time the alleged drowning took place, and that when I should meet this man, who was then employed in another part of the country, I might find out more about the matter. On my return to La Chorrera at the very end of October, I caused all the Barbados men to be brought in from out-stations I was not able to personally visit, in order that I might question them and satisfy myself as to their actual condition.

'This man appeared before me on the 2nd November, and in the course of my examination I questioned him as to his employment at Occidente. He then related circumstantially how on the 20th June 1910 only a few hours after Señor Tizon had quitted Occidente on a visit of inspection proceeding up river to Ultimo Retiro, four Indian youths had been ordered by Velarde to be taken down to the river, their arms tied together, and to be then held under water until they filled – or, as James Mapp, the Barbados man put it, until "their bowels filled with water." Mapp had been ordered to perform this task, and had point-blank refused to obey, declaring he would not lay a finger on the Indians, whereupon a "racional" employé, by name Eugenio Acosta (whom I had met at Occidente),^h had carried out Señor Velarde's orders.

'The four Indians, with their arms tied, had been thrust into the river by Acosta and an Indian he forced to help him, and held forcibly under water. The whole station and the friends and kinsmen of the four Indians were gathered on the high bank to witness this degrading spectacle, the Indian women weeping and crying out. One of the young men in his struggles had kicked free from the grasp of the man holding him down, and as his arms were fastened, he had been unable to save himself by swimming, and had sunk in the deep strong current at the spot described. Mapp states he never came to the surface. I had myself twice bathed in the very spot indicated, and found that the water rapidly deepened from the bank. The body had been recovered on the 24th June, floating in a backwater a couple of hundred yards below the beach at the mouth of a little stream. I requested Señor Tizon to be present at Mapp's examination on this point, which fully satisfied him, as it did me, that the witness was stating the exact truth.

'As Señor Velarde was at the time in La Chorrera, nothing would have been easier than to have probed the matter. James Mapp was perfectly willing to accuse him of the crime to his face, and, as he declared, to prove it on the spot by appealing to eye-witnesses who were also down at La Chorrera at the time. As the head of the Company declared himself as fully satisfied of the truth of Mapp's charge without further evidence, no action was taken to bring home to Señor Velarde a crime that was light in comparison with a hundred others preferred against that man. He, along with many others of the principal agents of the Company accused by the British subject I examined, I was assured, would be promptly dismissed. This promise of Señor Tizon has since been carried out.'

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These extracts from Casement's report may serve as indications of his treatment of evidence in submitting the results of his investigations to Sir Edward Grey. His instructions gave him no right to interrogate anyone except British subjects; and the letter which he had received from the prefect of the department

of Loreto, in the name of the Peruvian Government, ordering 'all the authorities of the district to afford him every kind of facility and to lend him such support as he would require,' was of no practical value whatever to him.

'From first to last,' he reported to Sir Edward Grey, 'I met no authority of the Peruvian Government, and could appeal for no assistance in my mission save to the agents of the Peruvian Amazon Company, who were in absolute control not only of the persons and lives of the surrounding Indians, but of all means of transport, and it might be said of ingress to or egress from that region. Had it not been for the presence of Señor Tizon and his ready co-operation with me, my journey could not have been carried beyond Chorrera. The perils, perhaps not to myself, but to the Barbados men would have been too great.'

An officer of the Peruvian army with a small file of soldiers had indeed arrived at Chorrera a few days before Casement left the river, but he had gone on at once. A magistrate was said to be residing at one of the Company's stations; but Casement declared that he had never once heard him referred to; 'and when peculiarly atrocious crimes were dragged to light, admitted and deplored, the criminals charged with them would be sitting at table with us, and the members of the Company's Commission and myself were appealed to to give no indication of our disgust lest this man "might do worse things" to the Indians, or provoke an impossible situation with the armed bandits under his orders.'

It had been a loathsome mission from start to finish. Only extraordinary fortitude and perseverance had enabled Casement to carry it out, with a thoroughness that made him explore forest country on foot, besides penetrating to the most distant stations. Even his own testimony could support an astonishing number of the charges that he had to bring against the Company's agents. At the very first station where the Commission and he had set foot on shore – at a place called Indostan, before they had even reached Chorrera – he had seen an Indian boy tied up with a chain some eight feet long, wound round his

neck and waist, and fastened at the ankle by a heavy padlock. Casement had inquired at once what the boy's offence was; he learned that the boy had attempted to escape by stealing a canoe belonging to the post and fleeing down to Brazil. The Commission had obtained the boy's release, and he had gone with them to Chorrera on their way up river.

From his own observation, too, he could see much of the brutal immorality that was prevalent among the traders everywhere. Every one of the notorious criminals whom he denounced had kept a large number of Indian women as their concubines. Men who gave Casement hospitality during his mission were living openly with three or more Indian 'wives,' and their children were in the house without the least attempt at concealment. And one day when they were waiting for the steamer to take them home at last from Chorrera in November, they had been struck by loud crying, as the Company's steam launch was setting off to Abisinia after the market-day. The notorious Aguero had been present in the town, and before he left he had coveted a native woman whom Casement had often seen and noticed sweeping out the dining-room of the house where he was staying. Her husband had died, and she had found regular employment at Chorrera, but now Aguero had seen her and desired her, and he had carried her off with him to add to the eleven native women in his own harem at Abisinia.

The attitude of the native women had impressed Casement deeply. They were loyal and faithful and affectionate to their native husbands, and he had been told by many witnesses the remarkable fact that no Indian would ever consent to work rubber again if his wife were taken from him by force. They might be killed or tortured in any way, but no power on earth would make them work again if their wives were stolen from them. Even Aguero had learned that; and it had been the reason for several of the murders he had committed against Indians whose wives he desired.

They got back to Chorrera in the last days of October, and they could only wait until 9th November, when the steamer *Liberal* would arrive. Then at last, when it was loaded and they were on board, they could feel like free men as they steamed away towards home.

Even in those last days of waiting he was still taking evidence, verifying and testing the truth of conflicting statements, visiting the stations and the Indian rubber workers as they brought in their loads for the steamer to carry away for the profit of the Company. He made more expeditions on foot; he met many of the principal agents of the Company. He met Fonseca and Agüero and others whose crimes made him sick with horror as he heard of them; and, having met them, he longed more than ever for the days to pass till he could reach London and make the whole world ring with the story of their infamies.

One point that was clear to him at once was that they could all escape as soon as the first intimation of any legal action against them should become known. He inquired in the Company's books to see how many of them were still tied by any accumulation of pay that they might forfeit if they disappeared. It was a blow to discover that almost every man among them was in debt. There would not even be any inducement to remain; and the prospect of capturing them, even if the Peruvian Government could be persuaded to take drastic action, was all but hopeless.

At last the whole cargo of the *Liberal* had been got on board – some sixty tons of rubber, on which every one of the criminal agents would draw his seven per cent. commission, had been carried in by the natives, staggering under their enormous loads. There were hundreds of miles of river still to cover before they reached Iquitos, where the last outposts of the Peruvian Government exercised any attempt at jurisdiction.

On 25th November they arrived there. The first down-river steamer, the *Atahualpa*, did not sail for another ten or twelve days. Still, they were homeward bound at last, travelling day after day along the Equator, while the great river grew always wider as it flowed towards the west. While they were steaming

on for a whole week more, the strain began to relax; but Casement's face was deep with shadows, and his constitution was on the verge of a complete breakdown when he reached the Atlantic coast at Para on 13th December. A mail steamer bound for England was due to leave four days later; and on the 17th he was already steaming towards Europe, with the vast continent of South America rapidly disappearing below the skyline.

On the last day of the year he arrived in Cherbourg, and a week later he had delivered his preliminary report in Whitehall.

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Casement's preliminary report was accompanied by a covering letter to Sir Edward Grey. 'The crimes charged against many men now in the employ of the Peruvian Amazon Company,' he wrote, 'are of the most atrocious kind, including murder, violation, and constant flogging. The condition of things revealed is entirely disgraceful, and fully warrants the worst charges brought against the agents of the Peruvian Amazon Company and its methods of administration on the Putumayo. I append to my report a list of those agents of the Company against whom the worst charges were preferred, and against whom the evidence in my possession is overwhelmingly strong. The prefect of Loreto again and again assured me that his Government was determined to deal with the criminals and protect the Indians.' The report itself was only a bald record of his movements and of the ground that he had covered in company with the Commission.

Pending the completion of his detailed report, the urgent matter was to deal with the black list he had compiled of 'some of the worst criminals of the Putumayo, all of them charged with the most atrocious offences against the Indians.' He insisted specially upon the need for immediate action, as they almost all were in debt to the Company, and consequently had no reason for delaying their escape if they should fear legal proceedings. Velarde and Montt, for instance, who were Peruvians, had both been dismissed as a result of Casement's

mission and both were in debt. Jiménez, a Peruvian half-caste, had committed appalling crimes in the Abisinia section when under Aguero, but his record had apparently been good since his recent promotion as chief of Ultimo Retiro. The chief offenders were nearly all natives of Peru or Bolivia or Colombia; but Casement included at least one of the Barbados men in his black list.

The worst of them all was Armando Normand, a Bolivian of foreign parentage, who had been largely educated in England. 'If anyone on the Putumayo deserves punishment,' Casement wrote, 'this man should be made an example of.' He, too, had been dismissed, and was to have travelled on the *Liberal*, but Casement had objected to having to travel on the same boat with him. He alone was owed money by the Company – some £1700 – and Casement believed that he would not try to escape but would 'brave things out and trust to accusing others.'

The need for rapid action was evident. Fully two months had passed since the Commission and Casement had returned from their investigation to Iquitos. Ten days more went by after the submission of Casement's black list before the Foreign Office sent its first telegraphic instructions to the British Minister in Peru. The telegram announced Casement's return and the general trend of his report, and it instructed Mr. des Graz to 'inform the Peruvian Government confidentially and in a friendly manner, stating that His Majesty's Government are unwilling to publish the facts without first bringing them to the notice of the Government primarily concerned, who they feel sure are ignorant of the crimes committed, and will, in the interest of justice and humanity, take steps at once to punish the criminals and prevent the continuance or recurrence of the atrocities.'

It communicated the black list of worst offenders, 'to assist the Peruvian authorities to bring them to justice and in the hope that the severest penalties allowed by the law will be inflicted, particularly in the cases where murder is proved.' Steps should be taken immediately, the telegram insisted, or else the criminals would escape. In the British Parliament

questions would certainly be asked, since the Company concerned was registered in Great Britain; and it was most desirable that full assurances could be given that the Peruvian Government was taking action.

By the end of the month, after several more telegrams had been exchanged, Casement had received assurances in Whitehall that the Peruvian Government had appointed a judicial commission of inquiry which would be at work in earnest in February. It was disquieting, nevertheless, that although Casement himself had information that several of the worst criminals were already in Iquitos, no mention was made of any proceedings being taken against them. The judicial commission was apparently proceeding to the Putumayo, leaving them in full liberty behind. In the meantime Casement had been working with fierce energy at the completion of his detailed report, and he was able to deliver it on the last day of January.

February dragged through, and March also was near its end, while Casement waited with growing impatience for the announcement of any real action against the offenders whose names he had sent out to Lima. His suspicions had been so much aroused that he persuaded Grey to open up the whole question with the United States Government, to make sure of its co-operation in bringing solid pressure to bear upon Lima if there should be continued neglect in punishing the criminals. Mr. Bryce, the Ambassador at Washington, was sent a copy of Casement's black list to communicate to the American Government. But still April passed, and no word of any definite action was forthcoming.

Meanwhile the whole question was being agitated in England; in Parliament questions were asked which compelled the Foreign Office to press for a more satisfactory answer from Peru. On 21st April Sir Edward Grey telegraphed again to Lima requesting information. Only one of the black list criminals, Grey understood, had been arrested, and he appeared to have been given bail. Most of the others were reported to have escaped, and Aguero was even said to have gone out into the Caqueta district with an armed band, after burning and

destroying everything that he could in the hope of stirring up the Boras Indians.

Not until the end of April was the first plausible reply received. It stated that a number of accused employees had been dismissed; that the Company's Commission had decided to reform its system by paying salaries instead of a percentage on the rubber output; that the manager had promised measures to protect the natives; and that the presence of the Peruvian judicial commission would be highly beneficial. Judge Paredes had set out on a gunboat and would spend three months on his task. Meanwhile many of the accused men had escaped, including Fonseca, Aguero, and Flores, who had fled across the river on rafts, taking with them some dozens of Indians of both sexes whom they intended to sell as slaves for £50 a head.

A reply was sent from Sir Edward Grey expressing the satisfaction of the British Government at the steps that were being taken, and not until the middle of May was a copy of Casement's detailed report dispatched to Washington.

Nearly half the year had already slipped by since Casement had returned and presented his black list, and no positive news of any real reform or punishment of the criminals had yet arrived. Casement had left London as soon as his report was safely lodged in Whitehall, and had gone over to Ireland, where he always looked for peace. But he was still hovering round the Foreign Office through the spring, urging immediate and drastic action as his impatience increased; while the storm of protest was gathering fast as the result of his investigations became known to members of Parliament and among the journalists.

It was clear that his reputation was going to be greater than ever, once the report became known. But the attitude of the Foreign Office seemed so long-suffering towards the dilatory methods of the Peruvian Government, that it was becoming doubtful whether his report would ever be made public. The bombardment of questions in Parliament became more insistent, and on 20th June Sir Edward Grey sent yet another message to the Minister in Peru. It enclosed the Spanish

translations of Casement's full report, and instructed the Minister to insist that 'His Majesty's Government earnestly hope that when further questions are put to them in Parliament they will be able to give more definite assurances with regard to the steps actually being taken to put an end to the present state of affairs, which dates from a period before the concern became a British Company, and for which it is clear that the Arana Brothers are responsible.'

In the meantime one definite step was being taken in London, which was to convey a clear intimation to Peru of how seriously the Government regarded the importance of Roger Casement's inquiry. Casement had gone down to stay at a farmhouse in Buckinghamshire to escape from the noise and the suffocation of London. He was there in the beautiful secluded little village of Denham when he received a very cordial letter from Sir Edward Grey, telling him that his name was to be included for a knighthood in the Birthday Honours list at the end of June. It was comforting to have this assurance at least that his work was not to be unrecognised, even though it was growing more clear to him that he would have to undertake another mission to the Putumayo before any real reform was likely to take place.

With a heavy heart he sat down and wrote a formal letter to Sir Edward Grey, thanking him for the honour he was to receive:

'Dear Sir Edward Grey,

'I find it very hard to choose the words in which to make acknowledgment of the honour done me by the King. I am much moved at the proof of confidence and appreciation of my service on the Putumayo conveyed to me by your letter, wherein you tell me that the King had been graciously pleased upon your recommendation to confer upon me the honour of knighthood. I am, indeed, grateful to you for this signal assurance of your personal esteem and support. I am very deeply sensible of the honour done to me by His Majesty. I would beg that my humble duty might be presented to His

Majesty when you may do me the honour to convey to him my deepest appreciation of the honour he has been so graciously pleased to confer upon me.

‘I am, dear Sir Edward,

‘Yours sincerely,

‘19th June, 1911.’

‘ROGER CASEMENT.’

Lonely, and with his health irretrievably undermined by his long mission to the Equator in the previous autumn, he was a tragic figure indeed to his friends who saw him during those anxious months. He had grown terribly pale and more haggard, and the sight of his mournful face saddened all his friends. He could never detach his mind from the struggle that he was carrying on almost unaided. He was not yet fifty, but it was painfully evident that he had not long to live. One felt in listening to him that he had begun to doubt whether his own constitution could stand the strain of his effort to relieve the sufferings of the remote and persecuted Indians whose language he did not even understand.

At least the new dignity that had been conferred upon him was an encouragement and a consolation; and his letter to Sir Edward Grey was pathetic in its revelation of his own loneliness and gratitude for recognition of what he was attempting. It comforted him most to feel that in honouring him the British Government had deliberately indicated to the Peruvians that it was going to insist upon real reforms in the Putumayo. Priceless time had been lost, and the delay was becoming intolerable.

By the beginning of July, it had become evident that much more drastic pressure would have to be brought to bear. ‘Inform Peruvian Minister for Foreign Affairs,’ Sir Edward Grey telegraphed to the British Minister at Lima, on 6th July, ‘that I have read the report of your conversation with H. E., contained in your dispatch of 4th May, and impress upon him that His Majesty’s Government attach the greatest importance to Peru giving visible proof without further delay that she is determined to eradicate the present abuses in the Putumayo,

and to arrest and bring before a proper court the criminals implicated. Failing such proof they will have no alternative but to publish Sir Roger Casement's reports (Spanish translations of which are now on their way to you for communication to the Peruvian Government).'

On the same day he telegraphed to Bryce at Washington, ordering him to impress upon the American Government that 'we should greatly appreciate any support they can give at Lima in this matter. It is public knowledge that very great crimes have occurred, and that His Majesty's Government are in possession of the facts. His Majesty's Government must confine their action to the protection of British subjects, and this they have done: but unless they are in a position to say that the criminals have been punished, and measures taken to prevent a recurrence of such cruelties, they will have no choice but to publish what they know, as publicity will then be the only chance of remedy.'

To Casement these continual exchanges of telegrams with Peru had become exasperating. His report had by now been with the Foreign Office for half a year, and each new threat of publication could only produce further delays by inviting some new plausible reply that would be only another excuse for postponement. Casement himself had been urging for months that one of the first reforms that should be passed upon the Peruvians was the encouragement of Catholic missionaries, whose efforts in the past had – according to the published statements of the Prefect Apostolic himself – been deliberately frustrated by the rubber traders in the conviction that it would impede their own freedom to exploit the natives. And only now, in mid-July, Grey was at last throwing out this suggestion when it would delay matters further.

The reply from Lima confirmed Casement's worst suspicions. It stated that Judge Paredes had completed a report of thirteen hundred pages, and that so many warrants for arrest had been sent out that the jail could not hold so many prisoners. Casement knew well that in the remote rubber districts it would be extremely difficult to effect any considerable number of

arrests. He saw at once that if the warrants were so numerous that they could not all be acted upon, it was inevitable that nothing would be done. He became thoroughly convinced that the whole inquiry was to be reduced to a farce.

His patience could hold out no longer. As a last resort, he obtained Grey's sanction to go out again to the Putumayo to undertake a second personal inquiry, to see what steps, if any, were really being taken. On 16th August accordingly he sailed from England; and after travelling up the Amazon in a small Brazilian steamer, which would enable him to call at various places on the way where he could count on obtaining first-hand information, he was back again at Iquitos by mid-October, exactly a year after he had arrived on his first mission.

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It did not take long to discover what had happened since he left. He was able to learn a good deal even during his journey up the Amazon across Brazil: 'Two of the worst of the murderers who had fled from the Putumayo after my visit in 1910, Peruvians named José Inocente Fonseca and Alfredo Montt, were said to be engaged in rubber-gathering by means of enslaved Indians they had carried away from the Putumayo into Brazilian territory at a spot quite close to the Peruvian frontier,' he reported. 'Efforts were made, at my instance, by the Brazilian authorities to arrest these men and expel them from Brazilian soil, but, unfortunately, owing to the remote region in which they had established themselves, and to other causes, the well-meant efforts of the Brazilian Government failed in execution on the spot.'

'On arrival at Iquitos I learned from the Prefect of the Department of Loreto that, although a total of 237 warrants had been issued by the investigating judge, only nine arrests of those charged had been actually effected. These men were the following: Aurelio Rodriguez, Homero Rodriguez, Alpino Lopez, Visitación Melendez, Manuel Vargas, Juan Quevedo, Augustin Pena, and Juan Sifuentes. With the exception of Aurelio Rodriguez, who had been one of the chiefs of section or

principals of the Peruvian Amazon Company, these men were inferior agents, who had merely carried out the orders of their superiors, and had derived no direct profit from the crimes with which they were charged.

'The managing director of the Company at Iquitos, Señor Pablo Zumaeta, against whom the Judge of First Instance, Dr. Valcarcel, had issued a warrant of arrest on the 5th August, had not been arrested, I found, but, with the connivance of the police, had merely remained in his private residence at Iquitos during the hearing of an appeal he was permitted to lodge. This appeal being considered by the Superior Court of Iquitos during my stay there, resulted in the court annulling the warrant issued by the criminal court below, and the return to public life of the accused man without trial or public investigation of the charges against him.

'The superior court, while annulling the order of preliminary detention against Zumaeta, issued an order of dismissal from his public functions of the judge, Dr. Valcarcel, on the ground that he had abandoned his post, and at the same time and on the same day took cognisance of a criminal action brought by the accused, Zumaeta, against the judge, whom he charged with "revealing public documents." The superior court, I gathered, had intimated that the preliminary proceedings against the nine men in gaol could only enter on the "plenario" or second stage – in other words, these men could only be actually brought to trial – when certain men charged by Dr. Paredes in his judicial investigations on the Putumayo were also arrested.

'This would imply that even in the case of those actually in jail the charges could not come to trial unless others, equally implicated, were also brought to judgment – an implication that I understand does not rest upon the law. Criminal proceedings in Peru consist of the "sumario" (preliminary inquiry) and the "plenario," or trial. The object of the "sumario" is to discover the existence of the crime and the person of the criminal, and proceedings under it are secret. If in a criminal case still in this initial stage some of the accused are absent and some are

present, at the termination of the "sumario" the proceedings continue as regards those present, and the judge passes to the "plenario" with regard to them, and sentence is pronounced. In the case of the Putumayo crimes the judicial proceedings have remained, so far, in the "sumario" stage, with only nine men out of some 240 indicted actually arrested.

'Many of those named in the 237 warrants of Dr. Paredes had already left the region before he arrived on the Putumayo. Some of them were the Barbados men, negroes of that island who had left the Putumayo at the date of my return in the end of 1910. Others, and these the far larger number, were Peruvians (sometimes Colombians), who had gone away following on my visit, and that of the Commission dispatched from London by the Peruvian Amazon Company. A considerable number of the men included in the warrants issued by Dr. Paredes, and among them several charged with the most atrocious acts, had continued, however, to dwell on the Putumayo, and to follow their ordinary avocation of forcing the Indians to bring in rubber at stated intervals.

'The date of Dr. Paredes' return to Iquitos with this large batch of warrants had been the 15th July last, when I understand the police were entrusted with their execution on all such of the accused as were known to be still within Peruvian jurisdiction. I received no explanation during my stay at Iquitos as to why so many of the individuals incriminated had been left undisturbed on the Putumayo for a period of some months, while others were even quite well known to be in Lima itself, at Callao, and places easily reached from Iquitos.

'Following my return to Iquitos on the 16th October, an effort was apparently made to arrest some twenty of those still employed by the Company on the Putumayo towards the very end of October, and in the early days of November. Although the localities where all of them were at work were well known, the "comisario" or commissioner of the Putumayo, one Amadéo Burga, a paid employé of the company, and a brother-in-law of its managing director, in each case took action just too late, so that all those incriminated were either absent in the forest or

said to have gone away only a few hours before the officer's arrival. The vessel reporting this unsatisfactory ending to this, the latest attempt to bring to justice the authors of so many crimes, returned to Iquitos on the 25th November, bringing only one man in custody, a subordinate named Portocarrero, who was among those implicated.

'All the rest of the accused were stated to have "escaped," in some cases, it was reported, taking with them large numbers of captive Indians, either for sale or for continued forced labour in other regions of the rubber-bearing forests. Some of those wanted, however, I learned subsequently had returned to their stations when the officer, who had failed to find them, had left the neighbourhood, and were at work again in the service of the Company at the date of my departure from the Amazon. Others of the individuals charged by the judge I found were, or had been, actually in Iquitos at the time the police there held warrants for their arrest, and no attempt had been made to put these warrants into execution.

'The evidence that I obtained during my stay at Iquitos, coming as it did from many quarters, and much of it from the Putumayo itself, induced in me the conviction that the punishment of the wrong-doers was a thing not to be expected, and from a variety of causes I need not dwell upon here, possibly a matter beyond the ability of the local executive to ensure. Suffice it to say, I saw no reason to modify the opinion expressed in my report of the 17th March last, that "custom sanctioned by long tradition and an evil usage whose maxim is that 'the Indian has no rights,' are far stronger than a distant law that rarely emerges into practice." '

He had purposely made no attempt to revisit the Putumayo territory, believing that by going there he might do more harm than good. He knew that the detailed report made by Judge Paredes had fully corroborated his own report. A copy of it, he was told, would in due course be submitted to the British Government. But such reports gave no guarantee that reforms would be enforced. There were so many difficulties that seemed almost insuperable. The conflict with Colombia over the

THE PUTUMAYO

frontier questions left the whole district almost a no-man's-land. The existing treaties with Brazil gave no power to extradite criminals who escaped into Brazilian territory.

From all that Casement could discover, he gathered that the old conditions were being rapidly re-established now that the fear caused by his investigations had died down. 'I learned,' he wrote, 'that the work of planting rubber trees and of substituting more humane methods whereby cultivation should partly take the place of individual exploitation of the Indian had been arrested by order of the local management of the Company, and the gathering of wild rubber re-established as the sole task of the various Indian communities of the Putumayo. These were openly spoken of as having been "demoralised" by the visit of the Company's Commission and myself, and their return to the immediately profitable labour of collecting wild rubber, under practically the old conditions, was announced as the first step of the local management to restore the Putumayo to its normal condition of healthy and profitable exploitation.'

'It was abundantly clear that the Company, or those who locally controlled the Putumayo in its name, having recovered from the shock of exposure and fear that followed the visit of the Commissioners and myself in 1910, had determined to retain forcible exploitation of the Indians as their right by conquest and their surest means of speedy gain.'

'That the Indians under this ruthless system were now admitted to have fallen from fifty thousand (the figure given by the Peruvian Consul-General at Manaus in his official reports of 1906) to not more than eight thousand in 1911 seems of no account to those exploiting them - although in that interval the output of Putumayo rubber has also fallen from 645,000 kilog. in the former year to some 236,000 kilog. in 1911. There are still enough Indians "to go round." The disappearance of the London company as an active factor restricts the necessities of profit-finding to a narrower field. While it needed a heavy output of hundreds of tons of rubber in 1906 upon which to found an appeal to British investors or speculators in 1907 for a hoped-for capital of £1,000,000, a diminished yield of only two

hundred tons will still maintain many families and individuals on the spot.

'The fate of the Indian supporter of this fabric of civilised society is of no account. The short-sighted policy which ends in working him to death, and denuding whole regions of their entire population, is only what has been the settled custom and practice of wellnigh four hundred years of Iberian occupation of that part of the world.

'It was not ever a fact, and is not now a fact, that the presence of the Peruvian or Amazonian Indian is incompatible with the existence or civilisation of the white man. It was not ever, and is not now, a war of plough against tomahawk, of colonist and cultivator against barbarism and warrior hunter. On the contrary, the Peruvian Indian is a being of extreme docility of mind, gentleness of temper, and strength of body, a hardy and excellent worker, needing only to be dealt with justly and fairly to prove the most valuable asset the country possesses. Instead of this he has been from the first enslaved, bent by extortion, and varying methods of forced labour, to toil, not for his own advantage or the advancement of his country, but for the sole gain and personal profit of individuals who have ever placed their own desires above the common welfare.'

In his final report to the Foreign Office after he returned to London, Casement emphasised with all his power the direct responsibilities of Great Britain for securing a reform of the scandals that had arisen in the Putumayo. Analysing the figures given in the official returns he showed that the 'total output of slave labour in twelve years' had been all but four thousand tons of rubber. In the last six years alone the output could scarcely have yielded less than £966,000 on the London market – to which the entire rubber production of the district was always sent; and it was all carried in British ships. The continued exploitation of the district, he insisted, must always depend chiefly on the amount of British support that could be obtained.

In order to produce these four thousand tons of rubber for the London market, he pointed out, 'the number of Indians

killed either by starvation – often purposely brought about by the destruction of crops over whole districts, or inflicted as a form of death penalty on individuals who failed to bring in their quota of rubber – or by deliberate murder, by bullet, fire, beheading, or flogging to death, and accompanied by a variety of atrocious tortures during the course of these twelve years, cannot have been less than thirty thousand and possibly came to many more. . . . Neither age nor sex was spared, all had to work rubber, to perform impossible tasks, to abandon home and cultivation of their forest clearings, and to search week by week, and month by month, for the juice of rubber-yielding trees, until death came as a sudden penalty for failing strength and non-compliance, or more gently overtook them in the form of starvation or disease.

‘With all that it has given to the Amazon Valley of prosperity, of flourishing steamship communications, of port works, of growing towns and centres of civilisation, with electric light and tramways, it may well be asked whether the rubber tree has not, perhaps, taken more away. It may be long,’ he concluded in one of the most moving reports ever printed in a Government Blue Book, ‘before a demoralisation drawing its sanction from so many centuries of indifference and oppression can be uprooted; but Christianity owns schools and missions as well as dreadnoughts and dividends. In bringing to that neglected region and to those terrorised people something of the suavity of life, the gentleness of mind, the equity of intercourse between man and man that Christianity seeks to extend, the former implements of her authority should be more potent than the latter.’

He travelled back through the United States with the object of meeting the British Ambassador at Washington, and of enlisting American sympathy for the crusade to which he had pledged the little that remained of his energy and life. Mr. Bryce went specially to New York to meet him, and brought him back to Washington, having taken the responsibility of delaying his return to England until a later boat. He was introduced to President Taft and to the chief members of the American

Department of State, and Mr. Bryce reported to London that 'he was able to create a personal interest in the matter among the higher authorities which gives strong grounds for believing that the publication of the report will be welcomed by the United States Government. It is my belief,' he added, 'that this would be a good moment for His Majesty's Government to suggest to the United States some definite line of action which the two Governments might take in unison, in order to secure once for all the stopping of the cruelties and oppression which have so long existed on the Putumayo.'

Casement had suggested, and Bryce himself cordially agreed, that it would help greatly if the United States would appoint an American consul at Iquitos, with special instructions to report upon local conditions in the rubber industry. Bryce had even ascertained already that the American Government would meet their wishes. He believed that such concerted action between the two Governments on such lines would compel Peru to come to an agreement by arbitration over the frontier question with Colombia, besides establishing a proper system of government in the Peruvian territory. And a telegram from Bryce to the Foreign Office a few days later, reporting that Casement was on his way to London, announced that his consultations had convinced the Americans that the Peruvian Government should be given one last chance and no more.

So after a whole year of waiting and of renewed effort, Casement had won through at last. His rapid visit to the United States had done more to accelerate reform than all the months of waiting in Whitehall. By early February 1912, he was back in London, and the next telegrams from London to Lima were in a very different strain. On the 23rd Grey telegraphed to Washington that the report he had received from Lima of the British Minister's latest interview with the Peruvian President had added nothing to what they had been often told before. 'The request for suggestions cannot be regarded seriously,' he telegraphed, 'as we have not ceased to make suggestions ever since the receipt of Sir R. Casement's report, all of which have been disregarded. We feel that nothing will be done by

the present Government, and that no progress will be made without publication of Sir R. Casement's report.'

At the end of March, Bryce was able to telegraph that the American Government would welcome the publication, and before the month ended Grey had replied that publication had been decided upon. In July the report was published broadcast, together with the entire official correspondence extending over two years; and a storm of indignation burst through the newspapers of Europe and America such as even Casement's report on the atrocities in the Congo had not aroused.

But his own years of activity in the consular service were at an end. His health had completely broken down. An invalid, disillusioned and haunted by vile memories that could never be effaced, he had retired from the consular service when he was still only forty-eight years of age. Like a ghost of his former self, he had escaped to find refuge from the nightmare of the previous years among the quiet valleys and the little farmsteads of his own people in Ireland.

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PART III

IRELAND

'Speaking with a full sense of responsibility, he went further and said there was no length to which Ulster would not be entitled to go, however desperate or unconditional, in carrying the quarrel if the quarrel was wickedly fixed upon them.' – MR. F. E. SMITH, K.C., M.P., at Liverpool, 22nd January 1912.

'If they were put out of the Union, . . . he would infinitely prefer to change his allegiance right over to the Emperor of Germany or anyone else who had got a proper and stable government.' – MAJOR F. CRAWFORD (organiser of the Ulster Volunteers' gun-running at Larne), at Bangor, 29th April 1912.

'England wants Ireland as an ally against Germany. She is willing to come to terms for that alliance. She offers the present Home Rule Bill. . . . But the question arises, could we not secure better terms? Would Germany offer us better? . . . Ireland, if she only knew, holds a winning hand between England and Germany.' – ROGER CASEMENT in the *Irish Review*, September 1912.

IRELAND

AN immense change had taken place in Ireland during the six years of Roger Casement's absence and pre-occupation with his labours in South America. Political excitement had revived, and risen to such a pitch that no one now talked or thought of anything else. To Casement, with his natural instinct towards politics, and his longing to escape from the haunting memories of the Putumayo, the Irish situation provided an absorbing new interest in life.

Throughout all Ireland, except east Ulster, it had been generally accepted as a fundamental axiom, affecting the whole outlook upon life in the country since the rise of Parnell's agitation a generation before, that until a native Parliament had been re-established in Dublin, no serious progress could ever be made in the country. Despondency had consequently prevailed throughout the country at the time when he had come home from his mission in the Congo. Only the small group of young political idealists with whom he had formed close relations had been busy with their own plans for an intensive revival of Irish Nationalist propaganda. The ordinary Irishman had settled down to a period of bitter disappointment at the failure by the great Liberal majority in the House of Commons to fulfil the pledge of establishing a native Parliament in Ireland.

But the outlook had been transformed by the dramatic events of the subsequent years. Mr. Lloyd George's meteoric rise in English politics had galvanised the Liberals and involved them in an open conflict with the House of Lords, over his famous Budget of 1909 which they had recklessly thrown out. The general election that followed at the beginning of 1910 had created a situation which, for the first time for many years, brought back the Irish Party at Westminster to a position of

dominating influence. Their support would be indispensable if the Budget were to be carried through, and the influence of the Irish vote in the industrial cities of England enhanced the price of the Irish Party's co-operation.

Redmond, who had led the Parnellites after the 'split,' had seen the possibilities of the situation that arose. By skilful bargaining with the Liberals he had made them commit themselves to a definite promise of introducing Home Rule in return for Irish support. He had insisted upon a still more important condition for his alliance. Not only must the Liberals promise Home Rule, but they must introduce a Parliament Act which would for ever destroy the veto of the House of Lords upon future legislation. Its veto had for years been the one insuperable obstacle to the introduction of any measure of Home Rule.

Two elections had been held in the year 1910, while Casement was away on the Amazon immersed in the tragedy of the Putumayo Indians. When he returned to Ireland in the spring of 1911, for a brief visit after his first report had been handed in to the Foreign Office, the Liberals were back again in power, but dependent upon the Irish Party for their majority in the House of Commons. He had renewed his friendship with the young men who had inspired in him a deep belief in the possibilities of the Sinn Féin movement; and as the year wore through, his own experience of the weakness and indecision of the Foreign Office in dealing with the Peruvian Government filled his soul with bitterness and with distrust of the promises of politicians. It convinced him also that the Liberals would never face the consequence of attempting to force a Home Rule Bill through Parliament, against the opposition of the House of Lords, and especially in face of the growing organisation of resistance in Ulster.

His own family were all Ulster Protestants, and he knew the obstinate, arrogant attitude of the Ulstermen. And as he grew embittered during those months of waiting in London he became profoundly sceptical concerning Redmond's prospects of keeping the Liberals up to the mark. Yet his own future, so long as he could hope to live – with his health already

undermined by his protracted mission on the Amazon – was to be spent in his native country. He watched the progress of developments with a new interest and a much greater intensity of personal feeling. He had counted upon playing an active part in Irish public life; and the establishment of any sort of Irish Parliament must increase his own opportunity for public service.

He had been swept away again by his second journey to the Putumayo, while the resistance to Home Rule was being organised with tremendous energy. When he returned in the spring of 1912, with his health more broken than ever by his later mission, events had moved very fast. Ulster had become the dominating factor. The whole resources of the Conservative party in England had been mobilised and concentrated upon a deliberate campaign of active resistance to Home Rule.

In County Antrim, when he came back as a worn-out invalid, to face the future with his small pension after he had retired, he found preparations for an organised defiance of Parliament in full swing. The Ulstermen had discovered in their chosen leader, Sir Edward Carson, a demagogue with extraordinary powers of mob oratory such as had scarcely been seen in Europe since Daniel O'Connell's time; and Carson's reckless self-confidence and contempt for Parliamentary government gave an astonishing character to the campaign, in which he received the fullest encouragement from English Conservatives. The Ulster Unionist Council had become the pivot of Unionist policy as soon as the question of Home Rule became a serious practical issue. Even at the beginning of 1911 its leaders³ had begun to issue amazing, reckless threats concerning their future conduct if Parliament should dare to override their own wishes.

In the week before Christmas of 1910 the Rt. Hon. Thomas Andrews, P.C., the Secretary of the Ulster Unionist Council, had solemnly announced, for the edification of waverers in England, that 'if we are deserted by Great Britain I would rather be governed by Germany than by Patrick Ford and John Redmond and Company.' On 9th January, while Casement was working

furiously in London at the completion of his report on the Putumayo, no less a personage than Captain Craig, M.P. – the present Lord Craigavon – had solemnly confirmed the same warning by an explicit assurance that ‘there is a spirit spreading abroad, which I can testify to from my personal knowledge, that Germany and the German Emperor would be preferred to the rule of John Redmond, Patrick Ford, and the Molly Maguires.’*

Throughout the year these lurid threats had been repeated with magnificent insolence by the Ulster leaders; and they had produced the desired inflammatory effect. Lord Craigavon’s brother, Mr. C. C. Craig, M.P., had stated, for instance, at a public meeting in Ulster on 17th October that: ‘If Home Rule was granted, it would not matter a row of pins whether they were separated from Great Britain or whether they were not.’

Casement had been steaming up the Amazon when the first really decisive move in the Ulster campaign was made on 25th September. On that day a great conference of Unionist Clubs and Orange Lodges assembled in Belfast, and they passed the following historic resolution: ‘That we, delegates of the Ulster Unionist Associations, the Unionist Clubs of Ireland, and the Loyal Orange Institution of Ireland, in united meeting assembled, recognising that the public peace of this country is in great and imminent danger by reason of the threat to establish a Parliament in Dublin, and knowing that such a step will inevitably lead to disaster to the Empire and absolute ruin to Ireland, the degradation of our citizenship in the United Kingdom, and the destruction of our material prosperity and our civil and religious liberties, hereby call upon our leaders to take any steps they may consider necessary to resist the establishment of Home Rule in Ireland, solemnly pledging ourselves that under no conditions shall we acknowledge any such Government or obey its decrees, and we further assure our leaders that those whom we represent will stand by them loyally in any action they may take, and give their unwavering support in any danger they may be called upon to face.’

* The popular nickname for Mr. Devlin’s Ancient Order of Hibernians.

The resolution proceeded to announce the formation of an Ulster Provisional Government. It was the starting-point of a campaign which developed with tremendous intensity during the months while Casement was engaged in his last effort on the Amazon. The whole resources and influence of the English Conservatives were thrown into support of the Ulstermen's defiance of Parliament. Incitements to organised resistance became the avowed programme of the Conservative party, both in England and in Ireland. Meanwhile the House of Commons was proceeding, in a series of tumultuous scenes, to carry the Home Rule Bill by substantial majorities through its various stages.

By the beginning of the new year, 1912, when Casement's retirement and definite return to Ireland was already decided, all Ulster was in a fever of excitement. Every week fresh encouragement was being given to the Ulster Unionists by leading English Conservatives, in reckless defiance of the authority of Parliament. At Liverpool towards the end of January Sir Edward Carson proclaimed that 'speaking here, under almost tragic circumstances, with the possibility of grave and official operations in Belfast and in Ulster within almost a few days, I say here, that not only do I approve of what the Unionist Council have done, but I say that if they did anything else they would have been false to the position in which they were placed. If that is inciting to riot, here I am.'

Among the speakers on the same platform was Mr. F. E. Smith, K.C., the late Lord Birkenhead. Speaking after Sir Edward, he also committed himself to the fullest approval of the anarchy that was being preached in Ulster. 'Ulster, in refusing to submit to Nationalist domination under a trick,' Mr. Smith declared, 'would be right in resisting,' and he for one, speaking with a full sense of responsibility, went further and said there was no length to which Ulster would not be entitled to go, however desperate or unconditional, in carrying the quarrel if the quarrel was wickedly fixed upon them.

The atmosphere had indeed changed from the days of his youth, when Casement came home in that spring of 1912, to devote the rest of his years to the public life of his own country. He had suddenly acquired a world-wide prestige. In Parliament his reputation had been immensely increased by the publication of his Putumayo report; his name figured throughout the newspapers all over the world.

He was the type of public servant whom Redmond and the Nationalist leaders were strongly anxious to attract into Nationalist politics; and the fact that he, although a Protestant Ulsterman, was well known to be an ardent advocate of self-government for Ireland, made him all the more valuable as an ally. Ulster Unionists were for ever talking of the greatness of Ulstermen's achievements in the service of the Empire; and here was Sir Roger Casement, suddenly sprung to an international fame, an Ulster Protestant with long and distinguished service under the British flag, anxious to assert his own belief in Ireland's right to possess her own Parliament. There were few enough converts to Home Rule among the Ulster Protestants, and his assistance was welcomed with open arms. In Ireland, his name was scarcely known; but his sudden prominence in the newspapers as the champion of the persecuted natives of Africa and of South America made him a heaven-sent recruit.

As he watched the progress of the agitation in Ulster, and thought bitterly how difficult it had been to stiffen the Liberal Cabinet over the controversy with Peru, he had little belief in the prospect of the Home Rule Bill ever becoming law. He knew the reckless arrogance and the obstinate determination of the Ulster Protestants so well, that he had no inclination to underrate their seriousness in organising resistance.

But a much larger prospect had begun to loom in his own mind. His close acquaintance with the Foreign Office and with international diplomacy had already fixed his mind upon possibilities of the future that scarcely anyone in Ireland had contemplated. Again and again, as the anxious months dragged on, Redmond and the other Irish leaders would proclaim that nothing but the possible contingency of a European war could



PORTRAIT OF SIR ROGER CASEMENT, C.M.G.

By Miss Sara Purser, R.H.A. (Reproduced by kind permission of the Artist)

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now intervene to prevent the passage of the Home Rule Bill to the Statute Book. It was the deliberate policy of the Nationalist party to ignore the Ulster agitation. They belittled it as no more than a repetition of old threats that had been raised with scarcely less vociferous insistence at every stage when the popular movement in the rest of Ireland had been on the eve of a political victory. There had been precisely similar threats and fulminations among the Orangemen when the Protestant Church was being disestablished. There had been the same threats against any surrender to the land agitation.

But they had all been futile when the time came; and Redmond deliberately treated the present agitation as being no more formidable. He had set his face against compromise, and relied entirely upon continuous argument and propaganda among the English electorate. By temperament he abhorred violence, and by training he had acquired a deep reverence towards constitutional government.

Only to the few who had made a close study of foreign politics, and whose temperament made them think of political issues in terms of dynamics, was there as yet the least misgiving as to what might conceivably happen if war in Europe should break out. The military and naval pretensions of Germany had for years been a theme for sensational journalism; and the Conservatives had shown themselves quite willing to play upon English apprehensions in the matter as an additional reason for listening to the protests of the Ulster Unionist Council. Captain Craig and his friends, when they spoke so proudly of preferring the rule of the Kaiser to submission to an Irish Parliament, were only hoping to work upon the fears of readers of the sensational press.

Yet always in the background of politics there did lurk that fear of a possible conflagration in Europe. Casement had heard much of it during those months in London, when he had seen Haldane and Edward Grey and his own friends in the Foreign Office – Sir William Tyrrell and the rest. His long friendship with E. D. Morel had encouraged him to follow European politics closely, and Morel was one of the best-informed

journalists in England concerning foreign affairs. He had formed his own conclusions from the public knowledge that was open for anyone to read; and in long conversations in Whitehall he had come to know how seriously the fear of war weighed upon the minds of those who were guiding the diplomatic relations of the Great Powers.

That war was being prepared, and on both sides of the opposing alliances, was plain to every one who had eyes to see. And Casement, drawing his own inferences from what he knew of the military and naval preparations of both sides, was convinced that war could not be long delayed. His own view was that it would break out in 1915.

Above all the turmoil in Ireland he could see the sword of Damocles hanging by an ever-weakening thread. Would there, or would there not be time, he wondered, for the Home Rule controversy to reach its crisis before the sword should fall? By all the rules of the game the Home Rule Bill ought to have reached the Statute Book by the end of 1915. But how far could the rules be relied on, when the whole Conservative party in England were deliberately breaking them and promoting an open defiance of Parliament in Ulster? Would the result be civil war in Ireland? Or would the end be an ignominious collapse of the Liberals when they were brought face to face with reality? In that case, would the Conservatives come into power, pledged to a policy of avowed repression of popular sentiment in Ireland? Would that happen before or after the outbreak of war in Europe? And if it did happen before war broke out, what would the prospect for Ireland be?

Ulster Unionists were announcing to all the world what their own attitude towards the British connection would be if Parliament dared to override their wishes. It was one of their most conspicuous organisers in Ulster, Major Crawford, who proclaimed at Bangor, on 29th April, that 'if they were put out of the Union he would infinitely prefer to change his allegiance right over to the Emperor of Germany or anyone else who had got a proper and stable government.' To the ordinary Irish Nationalist, these bombastic and treasonable utterances were

so profoundly shocking that no one took them seriously. They were regarded with ridicule as the most absurd manifestations of a mock-heroic campaign.

It was only in Ulster that Nationalists as well as Unionists began to realise that this time, under conditions that had never existed before – because they had found a leader of genius, and above all because of the approval given by the English Conservatives to his reckless actions – the threats of armed resistance to prospective legislation were really serious. And among the Ulstermen who quite genuinely took the leaders of the Orange Lodges at their word was Roger Casement, as he lived in retirement among the preparations for warfare in the quiet country north of Belfast. To him, these frequently recurring allusions to preferring German assistance to submission to Acts of Parliament passed in London had a definite meaning; more, perhaps, than they conveyed to the gallant gentlemen who uttered them so defiantly while they held the King's commission. He did not minimise the strength of their feelings. He did not even feel horrified at the lengths to which they announced their intention of going in defiance of Parliament.

To him these exponents of direct action in Ulster were realists in politics. As such, they commanded his unqualified respect. They knew what they wanted. They had already succeeded in forcing their demands upon the attention of Parliament, although they were only a small local minority even in Ireland. If such prodigious results could be obtained by the organised and fearless resistance of so small a minority in Ulster, he asked himself, what could not be accomplished by the united Irish Nationalists of the other three provinces – if they would only have the nerve to face the situation with equal courage and determination? In Ulster the Unionists had not hesitated to announce that their allegiance to the King would be at an end if their veto should cease to prevail. What would happen if the Irish Nationalists should, under a bolder leadership than they had known for many years, defy the whole British connection in the event of war?

Through the autumn of 1912 these considerations were

constantly in his mind. The wider aspects of the Ulster agitation became more evident as he noted each new phase of the situation in Europe, with an always deeper conviction that a world war was imminent. It dawned upon him that in the impending crisis for Europe the Ulster agitation was going to play a decisive part. The open endeavours to incite the army to mutiny in case the Home Rule Bill should become operative, were becoming more reckless and more confident. Sir Edward Carson had stated openly at a meeting in London in May: 'Supposing, for the sake of argument, what I do not believe, that the people of this country would allow the coercion of their kith and kin – what would be the effect upon the army? Many officers would resign; no army could stand such a strain upon them.'

Carson had good reason for talking so confidently. Sir Henry Wilson was the chief organiser⁴ of mutiny inside the War Office, rushing from secret conclaves with the Ulster conspirators to threaten Cabinet Ministers with what would happen if they dared to carry Home Rule. And in June Mr. Bonar Law himself had made the astounding declaration in the House of Commons that 'If Ulster is in earnest, if Ulster does resist by force, there are stronger influences than Parliamentary majorities. They know that in that case no Government would dare to use their troops to drive them out. They know, as a matter of fact, that the Government which gave the order to employ troops for that purpose would run a great risk of being lynched in London.'

There had been no situation like it for generations. To anyone who viewed it in its international perspective, as Casement did, it was becoming apparent that if any sudden war crisis should develop in Europe, the British Government would have its hands tied.

Towards the end of September Mr. F. E. Smith, the most active orator of the Ulster campaign in England, had announced with the same well-grounded confidence his own conviction that 'the Government is wholly lacking in the nerve to give an order to the British Army to use coercion in Ulster.' It was

three days later, on 'Ulster Day,' 28th September 1912, that the historic Covenant was signed, to which every Protestant in Ulster was invited to append his signature. It ran as follows: 'Being convinced in our consciences that Home Rule would be disastrous to the material well-being of Ulster, as well as of the whole of Ireland, subversive of our civil and religious freedom, destructive of our citizenship and perilous to the unity of the Empire, we, whose names are underwritten, men of Ulster, loyal subjects of his gracious Majesty King George the Fifth, humbly relying on the God whom our fathers in days of stress and trial confidently trusted, hereby pledge ourselves in solemn Covenant, in this our time of threatened calamity, to stand by one another in defending for ourselves and our children our cherished position of equal citizenship in the United Kingdom, in using all the means which may be found necessary to defeat the present conspiracy to set up a Home Rule Parliament in Ireland; and in the event of such a Parliament being forced upon us, we further solemnly and mutually pledge ourselves to refuse to recognise its authority. In sure confidence that God will defend the right, we hereto subscribe our names, and further we individually declare that we have not already signed this Covenant.'

The public signature of that Ulster Covenant transformed the Irish situation. In spite of all Redmond's efforts to discredit the campaign, it became evident that the issue would be much more complicated than carrying a Home Rule Bill. In January 1913 the Bill passed its third reading in the Commons and was presented to the Lords. Since the Parliament Act the Lords had been made powerless to reject it more than once if it should be carried again in the same Parliament with an interval of two years. The Lords threw out the Bill in January and the Bill had to be presented in the Commons, and fought through all its stages again. The delay of two years that must then elapse before it could become operative would carry the controversy on to the beginning of 1915.

Casement, as he contemplated the future, grew more convinced that it could never become operative before Europe

had been plunged into war. In that same month he contributed an anonymous article to his friend Bulmer Hobson's paper, *Irish Freedom*, which insisted that war between England and Germany had become inevitable, and that it would present the opportunity for a decisive agitation in Ireland which had been awaited for so many years.

To his friends he talked constantly of the menace of war in Europe. His whole attention was turned upon the probable effects of war upon the future of Ireland. The Home Rule Bill he regarded as being already dead. At best, he had always thought it a miserable compromise. What concerned him as the months passed was the certainty that Ireland would have to choose within the following few years what part she would play when war broke out in Europe. John Mitchel's old maxim, that had been so often quoted and so seldom applied, was always in his thoughts – that 'England's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity.' If the crisis were but foreseen and if plans were well laid in advance, he believed that within another two years the whole Irish controversy might yet be settled on lines that scarcely anyone in Ireland had dared to contemplate.

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Among his young friends in Ireland who shared his indifference to the fate of the Home Rule Bill, and who were fascinated by his wide experience of foreign affairs, were two poets in Dublin, Thomas MacDonagh and Joseph Plunkett, who had recently founded a monthly magazine entitled the *Irish Review*. They persuaded him to contribute to one of its earliest issues an article⁵ dealing frankly with his own views on the future of Irish politics.

He agreed to write a deliberately outspoken memorandum on the subject of 'Ireland, Germany, and the Next War.' The article expressed views that Casement could not well publish over his own name at the time; and he adopted the signature 'Shan Van Vocht' – one of the old Gaelic names for Ireland that occurs in many patriotic ballads, meaning literally 'the poor old woman.' It was a pseudonym which Casement had used

in his writings about Irish politics at frequent intervals since his return from the Congo in the spring of 1903.

The immediate pretext for his exposition of his views was a recent article in the *Fortnightly Review* about 'Great Britain and the Next War,' by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, in which Sir Arthur had written: 'I would venture to say one word here to my Irish fellow-countrymen of all political persuasions. If they imagine that they can stand politically or economically while Britain falls, they are woefully mistaken. The British fleet is their one shield. If it be broken Ireland will go down. They may well throw themselves heartily into the common defence, for no sword can transfix England without the point reaching Ireland behind her.' That, of course, was a terse and accurate presentation of the orthodox view of Ireland's position in regard to any future war. Not many people in Ireland would even consider war as a serious possibility; and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's statement was what every one took for granted.

But it was an attitude with which Casement profoundly disagreed. He seized the opportunity of replying to it with a reasoned statement of other factors that were constantly ignored. It required some courage for the young editor of the *Irish Review* to print his article; the article aroused surprise and an uneasy feeling at the time, and set many people guessing as to its authorship.

'I propose to show briefly,' Casement wrote, 'that Ireland, far from sharing the calamities that must necessarily fall on Great Britain from defeat by a Great Power, might conceivably thereby emerge into a position of much prosperity. I will agree with Sir A. Conan Doyle up to this – that the defeat of Great Britain by Germany must be the cause of a momentous change to Ireland; but I differ from him in believing that the change must necessarily be disastrous to Ireland. On the contrary, I believe that the defeat of Great Britain by Germany might conceivably (save in one possible condition) result in great gain to Ireland.

'The conclusion that Ireland must suffer all the disasters and eventual losses defeat would entail on Great Britain is

based on what may be termed the fundamental maxim that has governed British dealings with Ireland throughout at least three centuries. The maxim may be given in the phrase, "Separation is unthinkable." Englishmen have come invincibly to believe that no matter what they do, or what may betide them, Ireland must inseparably be theirs linked to them as surely as Wales or Scotland, and forming an integral part of the whole, whose fate is indissolubly in their hand. While Great Britain, they admit, might well live apart (and happily) from an Ireland safely "sunk under the sea," they have never conceived of an Ireland still afloat that could possibly exist or be permitted to exist, apart from Great Britain. Sometimes, as a sort of bogey, they hold out to Ireland the fate that would be hers if, England defeated, somebody else should "take her." For it is a necessary corollary to the fundamental maxim already stated that Ireland, if not owned by England, must necessarily be "owned" by someone else than her own inhabitants.

"The British view of the fate of Ireland in the event of British defeat may be stated as twofold – only two contingencies are admitted. Either Ireland would remain after the war as she is to-day, tied to Great Britain, or she *might* be (this is not very seriously entertained) annexed by the victor. No other solution, I think, has ever been suggested. Let us first discuss number one.

"This, the ordinary man-in-the-street view, is that as Ireland would be as much a part of, and belonging to, Great Britain after a war as before it, whatever the termination of the war might be, she could not fail to share the losses defeat must bring to a common realm. The partnership being indissoluble, if the credit of the house were damaged and its properties depreciated, all members of the firm must suffer. In this view, an Ireland weaker, poorer, and less recuperative than Britain would stand to lose even more from a British defeat than the predominant partner himself. Let us at once admit that this view is correct. If on the conclusion of a great war Ireland were still to remain, as she is to-day, an integral portion of a defeated

United Kingdom, it is plain she would suffer, and might be made to suffer possibly more, even, than fell to the share of Great Britain.

‘But that is not the only ending defeat might bring to the two islands. We must proceed then to discuss No. 2, the alternative fate reserved for Ireland in the unlucky event of a great British overthrow. This is, that if the existing partnership were to be forcibly dissolved by external shock, it would mean for Ireland “out of the frying-pan into the fire.” The idea here is what I have earlier designated as the “bogey man” idea. Germany or the other victor in the great conflict would proceed to “take” Ireland. An Ireland administered, say by Prussians, would soon bitterly regret the milder manners of the Anglo-Saxon, and pine for the good old days of “doles” from Westminster. I know many Irishmen who admit that, as between England and Germany, they would prefer to remain in the hands of the former – on the principle that it is better to keep the devil you know than fall into the hands of a new devil.

‘German rule, we are asked to believe, would be so bad, so stern, that under it, Ireland, however much she might have suffered from England in the past, would soon yearn to be restored to the arms of her sorrowing sister. Assuming for the sake of argument that Germany “annexed” Ireland, is it at all clear that she would (or could, even) injure Ireland more than Great Britain has done? To what purpose and with what end in view? “Innate brutality,” the Englishman replies – “the Prussian always ill-treats those he lays his hands on – witness the poor Poles.” Without entering into the Polish language question, or the Polish agrarian question, it is permissible for an Irishman to reply that nothing done by Prussia in those respects has at all equalled English handling of the Irish language or English land dealings in Ireland. The Polish language still lives in Prussian Poland, and much more vigorously than the Irish language survives in Ireland.

‘But it is not necessary to obscure the issue by a reference to the Prussian Polish problem. An Ireland annexed to the German Empire (supposing this to be internationally possible)

as one of the fruits of a German victory over Great Britain would clearly be administered as a common possession of the German people, and not as a Prussian province. The analogy, if one can be set up in conditions so dissimilar, would lie, not between Prussia and her Polish provinces, but between the German Empire and Alsace-Lorraine. What then would be the paramount object of Germany in her administration of an overseas Reichsland of such extraordinary geographical importance to her future as Ireland would be?

‘Clearly not to impoverish and depress that new-won possession, but to enhance its exceeding strategic importance by vigorous and wise administration, so as to make it the main counterpoise to any possible recovery of British maritime supremacy so largely due, as this was in the past, to Great Britain’s own possession of this island. A prosperous and flourishing Ireland, recognising that her own interests lay with those of the new administration, would assuredly be the first and chief aim of German statesmanship.

‘The very geographical situation of Ireland would alone ensure wise and able administration by her new rulers, had Germany no other and special interest in advancing Irish well-being; for to rule from Hamburg and Berlin a remote island and a discontented people with a highly discontented and separate Britain intervening, by methods of exploitation and centralisation, would be a task beyond the capacity of German statecraft. German effort, then, would be plainly directed to creating an Ireland satisfied with the change, and fully determined to maintain it.

‘And it might be remembered that Germany is possibly better equipped, intellectually and educationally, for the task of developing Ireland than even twentieth-century England. She has already faced a remarkable problem and largely solved it, in her forty years’ administration of Alsace-Lorraine. There a province, torn by force from the bleeding side of France, and alien in sentiment to her new masters in a degree that Ireland could not be to any changes of authority imposed on her from without, has within a short lifetime doubled in prosperity and

greatly increased in population, despite the open arms and insistent call of France and despite a rule denounced from the first as hateful.

‘However hateful, the Prussian has proved himself an able administrator and an honest and most capable instructor. In his strong hands Strassburg has expanded from being an ill-kept pent-in French garrison town to a great and beautiful city. Already a local Parliament gives to the population a sense of autonomy, while the palace and constant presence of an Imperial Prince affirm the fact that German Imperialism, far from engrossing and centralising all the activities and powers of the Empire in Berlin, recognises that German nationality is large enough and great enough to admit of many capitals, many individualities, and many separate State growths, within the sure compass of one great organism.

‘That an Ireland, severed by force of arms from the British Empire and annexed to the German Empire, would be ill-governed by her new masters is inconceivable. On the contrary, the ablest brains in Germany, scientific, commercial, and financial, no less than military and strategic, would be devoted to the great task of making sure of the conquest not only of an island but of the intelligence of a not unintelligent people, and by wisely developing so priceless a possession, to reconcile its inhabitants through growing prosperity and an excellent administration, to so great a change in their political environment. Can it be said that England, even in her most lucid intervals, has brought to the government of Ireland her best efforts, her most capable men, or her highest purpose? . . .

‘In a score of ways Ireland would stand to gain from the change of direction, of purpose, of intention, and I will add, of inspiration and capacity in her newly imposed rulers. Whether she liked them or not at the outset would be beside the question. In this they would differ but little from those she had so long and so wearily had measure of; and if they brought to their new task a new spirit and a new intellectual equipment, Irishmen would not be slow to realise that if they themselves were never to rule their own country, they had at least found in their new

masters something more than emigration agents. Moreover, to Germany there would be no "Irish Question," no "haggard and haunting problem" to palsy her brain and misdirect her hand with its old tags and jibes and sordid impulses to deny the obvious.

'To Germany there would be only an English Question. To prevent that from ever again imperilling her world future would be the first purpose of German overseas statesmanship. And it is clear that a wise and capable Irish administration, to build up and strengthen from within, and not to belittle and exploit from without, would be the sure and certain purpose of a victorious Germany.

'I have now outlined the two possible dispositions of Ireland that, up to this, British opinion admits as conceivable in the improbable event of a British defeat by Germany. . . . But there is a third alternative I have nowhere seen discussed or hinted at, and yet it is at least as likely as No. 1 – for I do not think the annexation of Ireland by a European power is internationally possible, however decisive might be the overthrow of England. It is admitted (and it is on this hypothesis that the discussion is proceeding) that Great Britain might be defeated by Germany, and that the British fleet might be broken and an enemy's sword transfix England.

'Such an overthrow would be of enormous import to Europe and to the whole world. The trident would have changed hands, for the defeat of England could only be brought about by the destruction of her sea supremacy. Unless help came from without, a blockaded Britain would be more at the mercy of the victor than France was after Sedan and Paris. It would lie with the victor to see that the conditions of peace he imposed were such as, while ensuring to him the objects for which he had fought, would be the least likely conditions to provoke external intervention or a combination of alarmed world interests. Now, putting aside lesser considerations, the chief end Germany would have in a war with England would be to ensure her own free future on the seas. For with that assured and guaranteed by victory over England, all else that she seeks must in the end be

hers. To annex existing British Colonies would be in itself an impossible task – physically a much more impossible task than to annex Ireland.

‘To annex Ireland would be, as a military measure, once command of the seas was gained, a comparatively easy task. No practical resistance to one German army corps even could be offered by any force Ireland contains or could, of herself, put into the field. No arsenal or means of manufacturing arms exists. The population has been disarmed for a century, and by bitter experience has been driven to the use of arms as a criminal offence. Patriotism has been treated as a felony. Volunteers and Territorials are not for Ireland. To expect that a disarmed and demoralised population, who have been sedulously batoned into a state of physical and moral dejection, should develop military virtues in face of a disciplined army is to attribute to Irishmen the very qualities that critics unite in denying them. “The Irishman fights well everywhere, except in Ireland,” has passed into a commonplace; and since every effort of government has been directed to ensuring the abiding application of the sarcasm, Englishmen would find in the end, the emasculating success of their rule completely justified in the physical submission of Ireland to the new force that held her down.

‘With Great Britain cut off, and the Irish Sea held by German squadrons, no power from within could maintain any effective resistance to a German occupation of Dublin and a military administration of the island. To convert that into permanent administration could not be opposed from within, and with Great Britain down and severed from Ireland by a victorious German Navy, it is obvious that opposition to the permanent retention of Ireland by the victor must come from without. It is equally obvious that it would come from without, and it is for this international reason that I think a permanent German annexation of any part of a defeated United Kingdom need not be seriously considered. Such a complete change in the political geography of Europe as a German-owned Ireland could not but provoke universal alarm, and a widespread combination to forbid its realisation. The bogey that Ireland, if not

John Bull's other island, must necessarily be somebody else's other island, will not really bear inspection at close quarters.

'Germany would have to attain her end, the permanent disabling of the maritime supremacy of Great Britain, by another and less provocative measure. It is here, and in just these circumstances that the third alternative, and one no Englishman, I venture to think, has ever dreamed of, would be born on the field of battle and baptized a Germanic godchild with European Diplomacy as sponsor. Germany, for her own Imperial ends and in pursuit of a great world policy, might successfully accomplish what Louis XIV and Napoleon only contemplated. An Ireland, already severed by a sea held by German warships, and temporarily occupied by a German Army, might well be permanently and irrevocably severed from Great Britain, and with common assent erected into a neutralised independent European State under international guarantees.

'An independent Ireland would of itself be no threat or hurt to any European interest. On the contrary, to make of Ireland an Atlantic Holland, a maritime Belgium, would be an act of restoration to Europe of this, the most naturally favoured of European islands, that a Peace Congress should in the end be glad to ratify at the instance of a victorious Germany. That Germany should propose this form of dissolution of the United Kingdom in any interests but her own, or for the *beaux yeux* of Ireland, I do not for a moment assert. Her main object would be the opening of the seas and their permanent freeing from that overwhelming control Great Britain has exercised since the destruction of the French Navy, largely based, as all naval strategists must perceive, on the unchallenged possession of Ireland.

'That Ireland is primarily an European island inhabited by an European people who are not English, and who have for centuries appealed to Europe and the world to aid them in ceasing to be politically controlled by England, is historic fact. And since the translation of this historic fact into practical European politics would undoubtedly affect the main object of

the victorious Power, it is evident that, Great Britain once defeated, Germany would carry the Irish question to a European solution in harmony with her maritime interests, and could count on the support of the great bulk of European opinion to support the settlement those interests imposed. And if, politically and commercially, an independent and neutral Irish State commended itself to Europe, on moral and intellectual grounds, the claim could be put still higher.

‘Nothing advanced on behalf of England could meet the case for a free Ireland as stated by Germany. Germany would attain her ends as the champion of national liberty and could destroy England’s naval supremacy for all time by an act of irreproachable morality. The United States, however distasteful from one point of view the defeat of England might be, could do nothing to oppose a European decision that would clearly win an instant support from influential circles – Irish and German – within her own borders.

‘In any case the Monroe Doctrine cuts both ways; and unless at the outset the United States could be drawn into an Anglo-Teutonic conflict, it is clear that the decision of an European Congress to create a new European State out of a very old European people could not furnish ground for American interference.

‘So long as the *vae victis* took so altruistic a form as the restoration of national liberty to a people who had persistently demanded it, America could not openly oppose so unobjectionable a consummation of German policy.

‘I need not further labour the question. If Englishmen will but awaken from the dream that Ireland “belongs” to them and not to the Irish people, and that that great and fertile island inhabited by a brave, chivalrous, and an intellectual race (qualities they have, alas, done their utmost to expel from the island) is a piece of real estate they own and can dispose of as they will, they cannot fail to perceive that the “Irish Question” cannot much longer be mishandled with impunity, and that far from being as they now think it, merely a party question – not even a “domestic question” or one the Colonies have a voice in – it may in a brief epoch become a European question. . . .

‘While the geographical position of the islands to each other and to Europe have not changed and cannot change, the political relation of one to the other, and so the political and economical relation of both to Europe, to the world and to the carrying trade of the world and the naval policies of the Powers may be gravely altered by agencies beyond the control of Great Britain.

‘The changes wrought in the speed and capacity of steam-
shipping, the growth and visible trend of German naval power, and the increasing possibilities of aerial navigation, all unite to emphasise the historian Niebuhr’s warning, and to indicate for Ireland a possible future of restored communion with Europe, and less and less the continued wrong of that artificial exclusion in which British policy has sought to maintain her – “an island beyond an island.” ’

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It was not often in those days that an article in a literary review could produce any marked effect, but the anonymous article which Casement had contributed to the *Irish Review* aroused keen speculation and discussion. It was preaching sedition in a practical form that would scarcely have been possible in normal times. But openly seditious bombast was being preached so loudly by Privy Councillors in Ulster that all normal restrictions upon freedom of political speech were in abeyance.

Week after week, in every form of words that could make their meaning as plain as daylight, the Conservative leaders were asserting their own intention to support the claim of the Ulster Unionists to be masters of their own destiny, regardless of whatever legislation might be carried by strictly constitutional procedure. They even gloried in accepting the challenge when they were asked if they were aware of the full implications of the doctrine that they were preaching.

Roger Casement – himself an Ulster Protestant with a record of public service much more distinguished than that of most of the celebrities on Ulster Unionist platforms – was applying with cold logic the identical principles which they were

preaching. If 'Ulster' could defy Parliament and claim to arrange her own destiny, with the approval of Privy Councillors and Die-hard peers, how indeed could they claim in reason that the same right should be denied to a much larger people with a much longer history? If Captain Craig and Major Crawford could announce that Ulster Unionists would welcome the rule of the Kaiser rather than the rule of John Redmond and his friends, who could complain if Roger Casement – being himself a member of the same privileged caste of Ulster Protestants – announced his own belief that the rule of the Kaiser would be preferable to the present misgovernment of Ireland?

Yet Casement's article in the *Irish Review* had deliberately dismissed the idea of accepting rule by Germany as the solution which Irish Nationalists should encourage. He had a much bolder conception which, from the point of view of European peace, was certainly formidable.

There was nothing fantastic, or even disputable, in his assumption that Ireland had always been, and still was, 'primarily an European island inhabited by a people who are not English, and who have for centuries appealed to Europe and the world to aid them in ceasing to be politically controlled by England.' He was merely propounding the right of self-determination, which within another few years, in a revolutionised world, was to become the slogan of all the Allied Powers. Contemplating the future with a foresight that only an intimate experience of international diplomacy could give, and with a bold self-confidence that only an Ulsterman in those days in Ireland yet felt, he had deliberately formulated the programme of Ireland becoming an independent State under international guarantees. Her geographical position would be so important that neither England nor Germany nor America would ever allow her to become the property of any Power.

In the months since he had come back to Ireland his political ideas had developed rapidly. The increasing fury of the Ulster agitation only hardened his views. He loathed this exploitation of a local Irish minority for the purposes of party politics in England. And in Ulster, when Nationalist meetings

were being organised to protest against the assumption that all Ulster Protestants were implacably hostile to the idea of self-government in Ireland, he was frequently invited to lend a hand.

The whole atmosphere of Irish politics was changing fast. Redmond was apparently succeeding in carrying the Home Rule Bill stage by stage nearer to the Statute Book. He had already accomplished the overthrow of the House of Lords. But the old reverence for constitutional action and for the traditions of the Parliamentary Party that had been inspired by Parnell was rapidly disappearing among the younger generation. They had begun to look for the arrival of new leaders; and among the distinguished public men who might be expected to play a leading part, once Home Rule became law, Roger Casement was an obvious figure to attract attention.

But his health was so broken and his energy so much impaired by the ordeal of his campaign on the Putumayo, that he still declined to take any active part. He was flattered by the suggestion nevertheless, and the applause he had earned in so many countries since his report was published had given him a certain degree of vanity. 'I am too old, dear youth,' he wrote⁶ to a young disciple at this time, 'to come forward as a political leader, and besides, I have no personal ambitions. A new Ireland will find a new chief like Parnell, like Owen Roe, or Hugh O'Neill. Were I twenty years younger, I would willingly plunge *in medias res*. But I have spent my years in the vilest climates, a militant Columkill, fighting in the name of Ireland for the poor of the black lands against slavers, and slave kings, too. Now in my old age I return to give a helping hand – no more than that at the utmost – to the gentle Irish, and for their sake I could never start Billingsgating and bilging against those I differ from; but I don't think . . . will ever lead Ireland; there are still gentlemen in the land.'

He had been drawn more closely into the councils of the extreme Nationalists by his personal friendship with the leaders of Sinn Féin, who were mostly Ulstermen. In October he learned of preparations being made for a meeting at Ballymoney,

close to his own home, of Ulster Protestants who repudiated Sir Edward Carson's violent campaign. The opportunity for joining with his friends in a public protest against Carsonism could not be allowed to pass. It was the first time he had appeared on any purely political platform, but he felt that it would be a betrayal of his convictions to remain silent.

Ballymoney was a unique centre in Ulster, where the tradition of that uncompromising Nationalism which had inspired Wolfe Tone's United Irishmen had never failed. There, even in 1913, a Nonconformist Minister and a Protestant solicitor had shown their readiness to join in organising a protest against the campaign of irresponsible lawlessness which Sir Edward Carson was leading. There, and perhaps nowhere else, it was still possible to organise an enthusiastic gathering of Ulster Protestants who abhorred the principles and methods of the Ulster Covenanters even more than they distrusted Home Rule and the Pope of Rome.

The preparations for the meeting have been described by Captain J. R. White in his autobiography⁷, and he shows how Casement's intervention gave an unexpectedly practical character to the demonstration. Only Protestants were allowed even to be present at the meeting, and the speeches in every case emphasised the staunch Protestant tradition of the district. Both Mrs. J. R. Green and Casement, among the speakers on the platform, must have derived considerable amusement from the local conditions which their own presence as orators was designed to exploit. Casement's speech announced his own public intervention in Irish politics for the first time, and deliberately repudiated any hostility to Ulster Protestantism. On the contrary, he proclaimed himself an Ulster Protestant, and insisted that he was one of a band of Protestant Home Rulers who refused to consider the exclusion of Ulster from Home Rule as a solution of the existing difficulties.

The meeting attracted considerable attention, and the London *Times* deliberately alluded to it in a leading article, attempting to discredit its importance. It explained that the gathering represented 'a small and isolated "pocket" of dissident

Protestants, the last few survivors of the Ulster Liberals of the old type.' To be described as 'a survivor of the Ulster Liberals of the old type' was more than Casement could endure. He wrote a letter of protest to *The Times*, which shows both the trend of his political views since his return to Ireland, and the enhanced sense of his own prestige which had grown upon him during the excitement that followed the publication of his Putumayo report.

'Those who dissent from what is termed "Carsonism," and who are in favour of considering with an open mind the question of the coming change of Irish Government and of Ulster's part in it,' he wrote, 'are a much larger body in the province than is summed up in the phrase "Ulster Liberals." Your correspondent is good enough to refer to me as one who "combines citizenship of the world with an enthusiastic attachment to romantic Nationalism."'

'It was doubtless an enthusiastic attachment to romantic humanitarianism that led my footsteps up the Congo and Amazon Rivers, and probably without that quality I should have failed in the very practical investigations I was privileged to conduct alone in both regions, and to bring to a not unsuccessful issue. That humanity has lost, from my being an Ulster crank or faddist of this kind, I must leave to a wider public to decide. I may say, however, that whatever of good I have been the means of doing in other countries was due in the first place to the guiding light I carried from my own country, Ireland, and to the very intimate knowledge I possessed not only of her present-day conditions, but of the historic causes that led up to them.

'With a mind thus illumined, I was not ill-equipped for comprehending that human suffering elsewhere, however dissimilar the apparent environment might be, originated in conceptions of human exploitation that are both very old and very widespread, and have not always been confined by civilised men to the merely savage or barbarous people of the world.

'Since a personal reference has been made to me you may pardon my adaptation of it, and admit that a wide outlook on

human affairs is not incompatible with a very near insight into and close comprehension of other things. For, unlike Sir Edward Carson, Lieutenant-General Richardson, Lord Charles Beresford, Mr. F. E. Smith, and many of those who represent Ulster either in Parliament or on the "Provisional Government," I am both by family and education an Ulsterman.'

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That meeting of Ulster Protestants at Ballymoney in October was the starting-point of Casement's career in Irish politics. He had no desire for retirement, and the excitement of public life drew him quickly into the rapid developments that followed. The young men who had first attracted his sympathies to the Sinn Féin movement nearly ten years before had grown older; with more experience and self-confidence they were already planning a new departure which was to revolutionise Irish politics in the following years.

The Ulster campaign had set an example which the rest of the country was soon eager to follow. The Ulster Volunteer Force had been organised in open defiance of the law, which in Ireland would not even admit of the enrolment of Territorials. Yet Sir Edward Carson, in defying the law, had obtained unflinching support from many well-known British soldiers. Lieutenant-General Richardson had even become commander-in-chief of his rebellious force.

It was inevitable that sooner or later the Nationalists, whose hopes of Home Rule were jeopardised by an openly illegal assumption of arms in East Ulster, would insist that they also were entitled to arm in self-defence. It was inevitable also that the movement should originate in Ulster itself, where the Nationalist minority were obliged to watch the warlike preparations and the organised military manœuvres of the Ulster Volunteers. In July, a small committee of advanced Nationalists in Dublin had met to consider the situation, thoroughly discontented with Redmond's attitude of ignoring the Ulster campaign. The idea of organising an opposition force of Irish Volunteers in the south of Ireland was then seriously discussed;

and in October the small group of Sinn Féiners who had first conceived the idea of such preparations as a counter-offensive, were suddenly encouraged by the publication of an article by Professor Eoin McNeill – an Ulsterman from the same county as Roger Casement – which insisted upon the immediate necessity of such an organisation.

Casement's friend Bulmer Hobson, undertook immediate steps to obtain McNeill's influential co-operation; and through the intervention of The O'Rahilly, an emergency meeting was held late in October which resulted in the formation of a Provisional Committee, composed almost entirely of young Sinn Féiners. It undertook to summon a large public meeting at which the new movement was to be launched. Redmond's hostility towards any breach with constitutional tradition was so well known that it was taken for granted that he would only discourage the movement, and prevent its formation, if he were consulted in advance. Even the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Mr. Lorcan Sherlock, was too cautious to allow the meeting to be held in the Mansion House, and it took place accordingly in the Rotunda.

McNeill, who had been the first public sponsor of the movement, was alone capable of enlisting influential recruits. He won the sympathies of Professor T. M. Kettle, who had retired from Parliament after a brief career of extraordinary brilliance at Westminster, but was still closely in touch with the Irish Parliamentary Party. His brother, Mr. Laurence Kettle, the engineer to the City of Dublin, became joint secretary of the movement with Professor McNeill; and through McNeill's influence, the Provisional Committee was incalculably strengthened by the inclusion of two well-known Irishmen. Colonel Maurice Moore, who had retired from the army after a military career of remarkable distinction, particularly in the Boer War, had quite recently published his biography of his father, George Henry Moore. It included the story of his father's unsuccessful attempt to found an Irish Volunteer organisation in the 'seventies.

To enlist Colonel Moore's sympathies for a similar enter-

prise, in counter-action against the campaign raging in Ulster, was quite easy; and McNeill obtained his active co-operation as a member of the new Provisional Committee. The subsequent appointment of Colonel Moore as Inspector-General of the new Volunteer organisation followed as a matter of course. But scarcely less promising than the inclusion of Colonel Moore on the committee was the adherence of Sir Roger Casement, who became one of the treasurers for the fund to provide equipment and arms. So, from the very beginning^s of the movement, Casement was personally active in its organisation.

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Through October the Provisional Committee were engaged in completing their arrangements, and on 25th November they organised their first public meeting at the Rotunda. The new movement had scarcely yet been discussed in the public Press, but it awakened a response that astonished its promoters. Long before the time for the meeting to start, it was evident that the very large hall they had boldly taken would not be nearly big enough. The meeting, both in the main hall and in the overflow assemblies outside, was a tremendous success. Before the crowd went home, some four thousand men had already enrolled themselves as volunteers, pledged to commence their military training at once.

Eight halls in Dublin were engaged for drilling purposes, and within a fortnight fifteen separate companies had been recruited and were actively at work. Enrolments proceeded so rapidly that new companies had to be formed; and competent military instruction was easily obtained by the ready enrolment of many reservists from the British Army. Bulmer Hobson became chairman of the committee of instructors, who held weekly meetings and arranged the programme of work for each week.

The movement was growing so fast that the whole political atmosphere had been transformed within a month. Hitherto the Ulster Unionists had been threatening Parliament with an armed rebellion if it dared to carry the Home Rule Bill into

law. Now a second illegal force of Volunteers had arisen. The Cabinet was faced with the certain prospect of civil war in Ireland unless it interfered.

For Dublin Castle the situation had become thoroughly menacing. It must either assert itself or else stand aside. It was already notorious that the funds raised for the Ulster Volunteers were being partly spent in importing arms and ammunition into Ulster; and now that both Volunteer forces were in open rivalry, Mr. Birrell, as Irish Secretary, had to face the prospect of intensive importations of arms on both sides. Within a week of the Dublin meeting to organise the Irish Volunteers, the Government issued a proclamation prohibiting the importation of arms into any part of Ireland.

To the Nationalists the Government's decision could only appear as an act of gross unfairness. The chief Unionist organ, the *Irish Times*, announced joyfully that 'Ulster Unionists are convinced that the action of the Government has come too late, and that there are now sufficient arms in Ulster to enable effective resistance to be made to any attempt to force Home Rule upon Ulster.' And two days later the same paper announced that 'It of course puts an end to the arming of the Irish Volunteers.'

Whether the Government had legal power to issue such a proclamation was doubtful; whether it could be enforced, if both Volunteer forces were in earnest, was still more doubtful. Meanwhile the organisation of the Irish Volunteers outside Dublin proceeded apace. Roger Casement threw all his energies into the new movement. On 12th December he went down to Galway to organise a meeting there with Professor McNeill, and three days later they both went on to Cork on the same errand. Neither of them was known to Cork audiences, and the crowded meeting in the City Hall looked with feelings of curiosity at the two Ulstermen who had risen so unexpectedly into a prominent position in Irish politics. As Ulstermen they understood each other, and they were old friends in County Antrim. In their journeys together from Dublin to Galway, and from Galway on to Cork, they had discussed the future

with an attitude that was not easily comprehensible to Nationalists in the south.

To them Sir Edward Carson was the hero of the new conditions. It was he who had preached treason in the very stronghold of Ulster 'Loyalism'; he who had asserted the right of Irishmen to arm in assertion of their political beliefs. Before they reached Cork they had decided that they would boldly call for three cheers for Sir Edward Carson as the man who had brought a new courage into Ireland. They spoke of their intention, before the meeting, to some of their friends in Cork, who warned them anxiously to do nothing of the kind. A new movement that was known to be regarded with suspicion by John Redmond and his friends must be launched with tact and moderation. But McNeill carried out his purpose, and the results were what they had been warned was sure to happen.

Neither McNeill nor Casement were natural orators, and in Cork the tradition of public oratory has always been high. The crowd listened with sympathy to the brown-bearded, mild-mannered professor, whose name was scarcely known even as the founder of the Gaelic League, in which he had been completely eclipsed by the oratorical gifts of its president, Douglas Hyde. They were more struck by the tall, languid figure of Roger Casement, with his dark, magnetic face, and his obvious fervour and enthusiasm. But when the meeting was near its end, and McNeill called upon them to cheer for the leader of the Ulster Covenanters, their patience broke down. Chairs were flung on to the platform, and Casement and McNeill had to retreat in confusion from the hall.

But the Volunteers had been launched in Cork nevertheless, and on the next day the misunderstanding was explained away. Casement went home well satisfied that further progress had been made in the 'rebel city,' amused rather than distressed by the episode.

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That visit to Cork was to bring Casement into closer touch with another matter which was to have a profound influence upon him in the critical months that followed. It had been

made known in the autumn that the Cunard Company, which had for years provided the chief business of the Cork Harbour Commissioners, had decided to withdraw its liners from calling at Queenstown. Now that the population of Ireland had sunk to so low a figure that few young men and women remained who could emigrate, the company had felt the loss of what had been one of its main sources of revenue in the past. The withdrawal of the liners was a shattering blow to the fortunes of the city, and the Cork Harbour Board had been deeply concerned over the loss of trade that must ensue.

All Irish trade was involved in the suspension of so important a shipping service; and a remarkable public meeting had been held in Dublin at which Roger Casement had appeared on the platform. He had even introduced a 'rider' to the main resolution which had been adopted, recommending the use of diplomatic means to secure the co-operation of some other transatlantic line if the Cunard Company would not reconsider its decision.

A sudden gleam of hope appeared some months later in the public announcement that the Hamburg-Amerika Line had promised that its outward-bound liners, on the Boston route, proposed to call at Queenstown in future. Their New York liners might also call at Queenstown on both voyages. A meeting of the Harbour Commission had been held a few days before Casement and McNeill arrived in Cork for their meeting to organise the Volunteers; and the Board had unanimously agreed to the chairman's suggestion that, as the s.s. *Hamburg* was to call at Queenstown on 6th January, the Commissioners should go in a body to welcome the captain.

Casement's personal efforts among his friends in Germany, as well as in America, had contributed largely to the practical consideration of such proposals. He learned of the latest developments when he was in Cork, and the possibilities fired him with an enthusiasm that went far beyond rejoicing at the prospect of a respite for Cork's threatened trade. For months past he had been thinking in terms of a European war. His thoughts, not least in connection with the forming of the Irish

Volunteers, had been concentrated on the future attitude of Irishmen towards the war which he already believed to be imminent within the following year. Here at his hand was an opening for entering into direct negotiations with the greatest of the German shipping lines, whose director was well known to stand high in the confidence of the Imperial Court.

Through Herr Ballin he could hope not only to come in direct touch with German foreign policy, but to impress upon the German Government his own views of the vital importance of Ireland as a buffer between England and the United States. He might yet find a hearing for his project that Ireland should become, through the cataclysms of war, an independent State with its own national Government, established under international guarantees. As such, Ireland could not fail to be recognised as one of the chief pivots of the freedom of the seas, which must be the goal of war when it came. In the introduction of German shipping to Cork, he could see, too, the beginning of a revival of direct trading connections between Ireland and the Continent.

Disappointment was, nevertheless, to fall upon the hopes that had been raised so high in Cork. A letter written from Hamburg on the day after Casement's Volunteer meeting, announced that the company did certainly propose to make its Boston steamers call at Queenstown on both the outward and the homeward voyages, 'and we do hope that this decision will bring a good traffic to these steamers.' But the date for commencing the new arrangements had not yet been fixed, and February was said to be the earliest date that could be anticipated.

Hopes rose high again, however, at the beginning of January, when a letter from the company was received, announcing that the *Rhaetia*, leaving Hamburg on 17th January, would be the first steamer to inaugurate the new regime. She would call at Boulogne *en route*, and was to be due in Queenstown on the morning of 20th January. On 5th February she would depart homeward bound from Boston, and she would call at Queenstown on the return journey also. A meeting of the Harbour Commissioners received the news with joy, and a

special resolution was passed: 'That we tender the sincere thanks of this Board representing the Port of Cork to the Irish and German societies of the United States, who have worked so energetically to secure the Hamburg-Amerika Line steamers calling at Queenstown, and also to Sir Roger Casement, C.M.G., who originated the project and used his influence to have same carried into effect.'

But a fortnight later anxiety revived. The agent of the line returned from Hamburg, and in an interview with the Commissioners' representatives explained that the German line were anxious that no public reception should be given to the steamship; 'they feared that if there was any demonstration of that sort, it might appear that they came here in an antagonistic position to the English lines. The company wished to call at the port on purely commercial principles, and desired that the vessels should be allowed to come and go without a public reception of any sort.' The agent had even said that 'if there was any public demonstration it might lead to a reconsideration of the whole position by the company, and probably prevent the vessels from calling at all.'

So the public reception was cancelled. To Casement, the reasons for the German company's attitude were easily guessed. He knew how tense the preoccupation of the chancelleries was becoming at the prospect of impending war. The intimation of vague anxieties on the part of Herr Ballin's company was a clear indication that diplomatic pressure had already been brought to bear. Within a week, his suspicions were confirmed. A formal statement in the newspapers announced that the projected call of the German liners had been abandoned. No reasons were given for the dropping of the scheme; but he knew well that the pressure of the Foreign Office in London had prevailed.

His own efforts, and the brilliant success which they had met up to the last minute, were to be completely frustrated. The first definite opportunity he had found for assisting his own country in a practical way had been stultified by the deliberate intervention of Downing Street.

He had been the only man in Ireland who could have brought off the negotiations with the German line; he had seen the opportunity and acted upon it with immediate enthusiasm. It meant saving the second city in the south of Ireland from ruin – a ruin which had been imposed solely and entirely in the interests of British shipping; and now even his own efforts to make good the wreckage that the Cunard Company had caused were to be defeated. As an Irishman he was to be prevented from doing what lay in his power to develop Irish trade, or even to save it from such shattering blows as British interests might inflict upon it.

He had grown fiercely bitter against British rule in the months since he had become actively associated with the Volunteer movement. The Arms Proclamation had given the Ulster Volunteers an immense advantage over the Irish Volunteers. And now the prohibition which prevented the German liners from saving the threatened trade of Queenstown was a still more serious blow. It was one which affected him most intimately, by destroying his own successful work. From that day forward his hatred of English rule in Ireland became an obsession which dominated all his mind.⁹

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Casement had gone over to London in February 1914, while the question of the Hamburg-Amerika steamers was being decided. He returned to Ireland considerably enlightened. He was more convinced than ever that war between England and Germany must break out within a year, and he knew the solid reasons which had prevailed upon the British Foreign Office to intervene. But they only confirmed his own reading of events. He had no sympathy whatever with the considerations that had prevailed in Whitehall. He had pledged the remainder of his precarious life to an effort to re-establish Ireland as a nation. British interests might dictate that Irish trade and Irish prosperity were to be of no account. It was his own mission to organise Irish defiance of British domination.

To one of his young friends who had written him a

letter that he found awaiting him on his return, he sent a long reply¹⁰: –

‘The game now, I see, is this,’ he wrote. ‘Under cover of “an offer to Ulster,” they are going to strip all the flesh off the Home Rule Bill – if we let them! Shall we? That is for you and others to think over. Meantime I am convinced the right and patriotic thing for all Irishmen to do is to go on with the Volunteers: Volunteers in every county, city, town, and village of Ireland. Don’t despair of the arms. I think we can get them. The Irish in America will not desert us in this crisis. I believe I can get you help from them the English little dream of to-day. – They (the English) are going to surrender to Carson “to save bloodshed” – please God, they’ll have more bloodshed than they suspect, if they consummate this final act of *Punica fides*.

‘I’ve a good mind to write to Carson to-night and ask him to come to Cork with me!

‘My God – I wonder what would happen if he said “yes.” Would you all rise to the occasion – or would you tear us limb from limb? What you say about him being King of Ireland – I’ve said too – if he would only rise to the height of a supreme occasion. He could save Ireland and make Ireland. But it is a dream to think of him doing it – if he really loved Ireland, as I do, he’d come. Shall I ask him? I don’t know him at all, and I’ve blackguarded him openly in the Holy of Holies (County Antrim), but he knows I am honest, and sincere, and fearless – qualities he himself, I think, possesses. I like him far better than these craven, scheming, plotting Englishmen, whose one aim is to see how *little* freedom they can give Ireland and call it by another name.

‘Don’t despair – don’t despond. We shall win, rest assured of that. Ireland was not born to suffering through the ages to end in death and despair at last. Her people have not kept their religion and their souls for nothing. Let them be men and do, on a far bigger scale, what Ulster has done. If only all will put their backs into the Volunteer cause – freedom may come sooner than you think. *Go on with the Volunteers.* . . .

'This exposure of the Queenstown jugglery is only a small thing in itself, but it opens a lot. It opens a big door and with the help of the good God I mean to see that door kept open wide. I am going, please God, to carry this fight much further than they think in Downing Street – to an arbitrament they dread very much. They will pay dearly for their "diplomacy," and our whole people, I hope, will begin to *think* on these things – and think as freemen, not as slaves. For the solution lies always in our hands. The day we *will* our freedom we can achieve it. Rest assured of that. It is not England now enslaves us. She simply deals with us as slaves because she knows we *are* slaves.

'This is the psychology of the situation. She recoils from the Ulstermen, because they are *not* slaves – and she knows it! They tell her to go to hell, and prepare to send her there, and you see she draws back, talks of compromise, "concession," and you and I, the mere Irish, are to take it in the old abject submission. Well, I for one won't – I mean to fight – and if John Bull betrays Ireland again, as I am quite certain he means to do, then with the help of God, and *some* Irishmen, he'll learn that all Irishmen are not slaves and there is fight in us still. . . .

'I am awfully pressed for I have a lot to do, and I go off on my great quest in a few weeks. And my word to you is *trust in ourselves* – inspire every man in Cork to be a fighting man in the true sense – to prefer death to dishonour: to prefer to die rather than live a serf, a bond-serf of the meanest form of exploitation I suppose any Imperial system has ever devised.

'I'll get you arms yet – don't fear, fifty thousand of them if *you'll* get the men ready.'

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The 'great quest' to which he alluded was the journey to America, which he already contemplated. The frustration of his negotiations with the Hamburg-Amerika Company had turned his thoughts more than ever towards Germany. But most of all would depend on America – if his own vision was to materialise of a free Ireland, becoming the pivot of the Atlantic, around which the maritime rivalries of England, Germany, and America were to be neutralised.

For the present it was most urgent that he should get his own views known in Germany. He believed that he could achieve his purpose better by conducting the negotiations through the German Embassy in Washington than by going straight to Germany, where his movements and his conversations would attract attention and be suspect to both sides. He drew up a carefully considered memorandum, outlining his own views of the possibility of winning American co-operation in securing independence for Ireland under international guarantees when war broke out. He intended this to be handed by confidential agents to the German Ambassador in Washington; and in order to avoid suspicion he sent Bulmer Hobson to the United States to bring the memorandum. Hobson would not even see Bernstorff personally. But they could count upon John Devoy and his Irish-American friends to convey it safely to the right quarters.

Already the Irish-American societies were becoming actively interested in the promotion of the Irish Volunteers. John Devoy was alive to the imminence of war in Europe. The old Fenian had been much more active of late. He had enrolled Patrick Pearse as a member of the Irish Republican Brotherhood the year before – when Pearse had gone out to the United States, with barely enough¹⁰ money to pay his passage, in a desperate effort to raise funds to keep his Irish-speaking school, St. Enda's, in existence.

Pearse had come back more absorbed than ever in his own dream of an Irish revolution in which he was to play a leading part. He had undertaken a new campaign to enrol members of the I.R.B. It was largely through their activity, thus stimulated, that the preliminary meetings of the Provisional Irish Volunteer Committee had come to pass. It had been Pearse, with his superb oratorical gifts and his trumpet-like voice, who had roused the first Volunteer meeting in the Rotunda at Dublin to enthusiasm. And it was the same group of young Fenians, gathered around Pearse as their leader, who had devoted all their energies to spreading the Volunteer movement with astonishing rapidity.

They had made such progress with their military training that it was now necessary to obtain arms by any means. The Arms Proclamation had for the time being checked the importation of rifles into Ulster, but gun-running by the Orangemen was already being organised. By the middle of March the War Office had received so many reports of the possibility of raids upon the arsenals and depots that a letter¹¹ was sent to the Commander-in-Chief in Ireland, General Paget, to say that 'It is considered advisable that you should at once take special precautions for safeguarding the depots and other places where arms and stores are kept as you may think it advisable. It appears from information received that Armagh, Omagh, Carrickfergus, and Enniskillen are insufficiently guarded, being especially liable to attack. You will therefore please to take the necessary steps and report to this office.' The situation, however, had become so inflamed that even to move troops to protect the depots in Ulster was certain to provoke an outcry.

General Paget had already made an extraordinary speech at a public dinner in Dublin. He had declared openly, in the presence of many leading Unionists, that 'certainly it is not thinkable, it is not possible for me to contemplate even being asked to concentrate my men and move them against the forces that are, I believe, in being in the north of Ireland.' That speech was allowed to pass without even provoking a reprimand from the War Office. What it meant in practice became apparent at once, now that the War Office issued its belated orders that at least the depots in Ulster must be protected.

General Paget replied that 'In the present state of the country I am of opinion that any such movement of troops would create intense excitement in Ulster, and possibly precipitate a crisis. For these reasons I do not consider myself justified in moving troops at the present time, although I am keeping a sufficient number in readiness to move at short notice, in case the situation should develop into a more dangerous state.' Having dispatched that amazing explanation of his own inaction, he proceeded to London for an interview with Colonel Seely, the War Minister.

As yet there was little public knowledge concerning the exchanges that were taking place between the Commander-in-Chief in Ireland and the War Office. But the paralysis of the Government in face of the Ulster Volunteers was undeniable. The organisers of the Irish Volunteer movement could point week by week to fresh indications of the helplessness of the British Government. If Irish Nationalists did not take the law into their own hands and confront the Government with another Volunteer organisation, larger and more determined than the Ulster Force, the Government would never have the nerve to enforce Home Rule.

The efforts of the Unionist leaders to seduce the allegiance of the Army had been successful. Carson himself had never made the smallest mystery about it. He had declared openly at Ballymena in the previous July that if the Government dared to intervene to put down his own illegal movement it 'will, I believe, smash the Army into pieces because it will divide the Army.' At Belfast two months later, he had warned the Government – and with the best of reasons, since he was in close touch with Sir Henry Wilson and other organisers of mutiny in the War Office – that if the Government interfered it would have a 'disastrous effect upon the forces of the Crown.' He boasted that he had received many secret promises from officers in the Army, some of whom were well-known generals, that they would give effect to his own threats if need arose. It was no secret that many hundreds of officers had signed the Ulster Covenant.

The Unionist Press joined in the incitements to disaffection. The *Observer* on 30th November – only a few days after the first meeting that launched the Irish Volunteers – had urged that 'every Unionist ought to prepare to leave the Territorials.' It proclaimed, only eight months before war broke out in Europe, that 'the whole of Unionist influence throughout the country ought to be used to prevent recruits from joining as long as there is the slightest threat of coercing Ulster.'

It was no wonder that Colonel Seely was confronted in the following March with General Paget's astounding announce-

ment that he dare not even send troops to guard the military depots in Ulster. Even while General Paget was in London, explaining the difficulties, a telegram was received from General Friend, whom he had left in charge in Dublin, which made the still more astonishing announcement that 'it is rather doubtful if the Northern Railway will allow troop trains to travel northwards.' The Cabinet, when confronted with General Paget's evasion of his orders to guard the depots, attempted vainly to insist that its orders must be obeyed. The War Office was in a fever of excitement, and in despair the Cabinet turned to the Admiralty. There at least orders were still obeyed, and arrangements were made at once for the dispatch of warships to Belfast to carry the troops that General Friend had feared to send by train.

Some pretence at enforcing the authority of the Cabinet had to be made, and General Macready was sent to Belfast with special powers to take charge of the situation in Ulster. By that time it was found that the troops had been sent north by train. The bluejackets were ordered to stand by in Belfast harbour, but with instructions that they might only go ashore in civilian clothes for fear of annoying the Ulstermen. General Paget was sent back to Ireland to resume his duties as Commander-in-Chief, and on 20th March he reported 'Commencement of all movements started successfully.'

Meanwhile the drilling and the surreptitious arming of both forces of Volunteers proceeded with greater energy than ever. The bewildering instructions of the War Office and of the Admiralty had convinced the Nationalists that the Home Rule Bill could only be carried through by boldness. Recruiting for the Irish Volunteers increased with marked rapidity. It was to receive an immense impetus from the next phase of developments.

General Paget, returning to Ireland with fresh instructions from Whitehall, took the strange step of summoning a conference of officers at the Curragh, at which he explained that certain 'precautionary measures' were being prepared. He informed them of his own opinion – with which, he said, the War Office

disagreed – that the precautionary measures could not be taken without provoking resistance; and further that the War Office had consented that officers who were actually domiciled in Ulster should be allowed to ‘disappear’ while the trouble was on foot, without incurring any disciplinary measures. He then explained that a second conference would be held in the afternoon. He would know by the fact of whether they attended that conference or not, whether individual officers shared his own view that ‘duty came before all other considerations.’

No information has ever been made public of what took place at the second conference in the afternoon. But early that evening the War Office received a telegram from General Paget announcing that ‘Officer commanding 5th Lancers reports that all officers except two, and one doubtful, are resigning their commissions to-day. I much fear same conditions in the 16th Lancers. Fear men will refuse to move.’ Shortly before midnight a second telegram arrived which said: ‘Regret to report Brigadier and fifty-seven officers Third Cavalry Brigade prefer to accept dismissal if ordered north.’

The campaign to organise disaffection among the Army officers had reached its climax. The War Office, undermined sedulously from within for months past, was confronted with the dilemma that had been carefully prepared. All the chancelleries of Europe were already alive to the growing imminence of war; yet the British Army was paralysed for political reasons. With a vain pretence at enforcing discipline, Colonel Seely telegraphed to Dublin that the commanding officers were to be relieved of their commands and must come to London immediately to report. But they had little need to fear the consequences of their action. The Director of Military Operations in Whitehall had been their most trusted agent for months past.

With buoyant spirits and a sense of outraged innocence they crossed in a body to London, and were met in a series of sympathetic conferences during the following days. A way out was discovered without much difficulty. The whole episode was explained away as a series of unfortunate misunderstandings.

The Colonels and Brigadier were reinstated, after they had been given a formal document, signed by Colonel Seely and Sir John French and General Ewart, which gave an explicit guarantee that the Government 'have no intention whatever of taking advantage of this right, to crush political opposition to the policy or principles of the Home Rule Bill.'

The commanding officers travelled back triumphantly to the Curragh, where they were met by a squadron of the 16th Lancers drawn up in parade order. From the steps of his house General Gough addressed the troops and informed them that they would never be called upon to bear arms against Ulster. That incident was too outrageous to pass unnoticed. A fierce outburst of indignation in the House of Commons, led chiefly by an unexpected intervention by the Labour member, Mr. John Ward, proclaimed that Parliament must not allow itself to be overridden by the Army.

The document which General Gough had brought back in triumph to the Curragh was made public in response to indignant protests. Colonel Seely's resignation followed immediately – though its ostensible pretext was only a further 'misunderstanding' in the drafting of the document in its final form. Both Sir John French and General Ewart had to resign their positions as well. Mr. Asquith attempted to restore confidence by becoming War Minister himself, and every effort was made to assure the public that mutiny in the Army would not be allowed to interfere with the rights of Parliament.

In Ireland, however, the outbreak of the Curragh mutiny was the final proof of how matters had been allowed to drift. The Home Rule Bill was fast becoming a mockery. Redmond, who had watched the formation of the Volunteers with strong disapproval, and had hoped against hope that the Government would make a stand against the Covenanters' intrigues, found at once that his own leadership of the Nationalist movement was undermined. Only by placing himself at the head of the Volunteer movement could he hope to control the situation.

To the Volunteer Committee, who had brought the movement to life and who wished from the beginning that he would

give it his support and encouragement, his belated intervention was far from welcome. Their own ideas had moved fast in the intoxicating excitement of military organisation in defiance of the law. Discontent with the Home Rule Bill – which had always excluded the right to organise any military force in Ireland – had grown widespread. Many Liberals were already talking openly of a compromise that would exclude Ulster from Home Rule, and the Volunteers were profoundly uneasy as to how far Redmond could be relied upon to make a firm stand.

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Among the leading members of the Volunteer Committee, Roger Casement was one of the few who welcomed Redmond's belated co-operation. He was convinced, in his own excited state of mind, that the infectious enthusiasm of the new movement would induce Redmond to drop the Home Rule Bill altogether rather than compromise. 'Irishmen should be grateful to the English Unionist leaders,' he wrote in the *Irish Volunteer* of 4th April 1914, 'the Press organs, and above all, to their military junta for the striking revelation we have had once and for all of the true meaning of the word "Unionism" in British politics. Not that any Irishman of average intelligence has ever been in doubt about the realities. No matter what side we take in politics, we all know that Unionism means the military occupation of Ireland as a conquered country; that the real headquarters of Irish government on the "Unionist" principle is the Curragh Camp, to which the offices of Dublin Castle are only a sort of vermiform appendix.' He was prepared to admit that the appearance of an Imperial link had been studiously preserved 'for the edification of other "partners" in the "Union," and especially for the benefit of the United States of America, but the pretence is now shattered for ever.'

'The significance of the Curragh *coup d'état*,' he continued, 'will not be mistaken by any European Government or people, or by the Government and people of the United States of America. The cardinal fact is not the successful attempt of the Curragh military junta to dictate the policy and future of the

Irish Government to the Imperial Ministry, who in a moment of aberration thought that an army of occupation could be used to impose self-government. Now, thanks to the sense of truth of our military rulers, the cat is out of the Irish bag. The thing that speaks to the world is the whole-hearted and unanimous endorsement of the Curragh *pronunciamiento* by the leaders and spokesmen of the English governing classes, the owners of Ireland, who, as the "Constitutional Party," are ready and eager for the opportunity of again undertaking the government of Ireland by the Army. The Liberal Government admits its error, and countermands the foolish and subversive orders given. The British Constitution does not die so easily in Ireland.

'British ministers and ex-ministers,' he concluded, 'will do their best to slur over the significance of recent events. They know well that military government will not be tolerated in Great Britain; they know equally well that the only government in Ireland is militarism. Liberalism, having asserted public rights in Great Britain, will not and cannot free Ireland from British military domination. Very well,' he added, with an outburst that revealed his political creed, 'somebody else will. Perhaps, however, it is best that the menace and the insult should remain, and that nothing should take place to cloak the naked truth, until the Irish people fully realise the duty imposed upon their honour and patriotism.'

English Liberals might console themselves with the thought that Asquith, by duplicating the offices of Prime Minister and Minister for War, had shown the determination of his Cabinet to assert the supremacy of Parliament. Mr. Asquith himself had ample reason for thinking otherwise, as he received the reports of growing uneasiness among the chancelleries. His Director of Military Operations⁴ was truculently urging him to cease all this nonsense of pretending to carry Home Rule, when war was on the eve of breaking out in Europe.

Towards the end of January Sir Henry Wilson had gone away on his usual holiday abroad, and before returning to duty in London, he had paid a visit to his own home in Ulster. In Belfast he delivered a lecture to the troops in the Victoria

Barracks concerning the importance of the Balkans in relation to questions of peace and war. He also paid a visit (his biographer tells us) to the Ulster Unionist offices. In his diary he recorded his impressions, which were that 'The arrangements of the Ulster Army are well advanced, and there is no doubt of the discipline and spirit of men and officers. I must come over later and see the troops at work. Many remarkable stories of Carson's power were told me.'

He returned to London, and on the first day he was back at work Colonel Seely sent for him and asked for his opinion of the Ulster situation. 'I told him exactly what I thought,' he recorded in his diary, 'which was that the Government are done. That they have bumped up against one hundred thousand men who are in deadly earnest and that, as neither the Cabinet nor Englishmen are ever in earnest about anything, Ulster was certain to win. Seely said that he had always told the Cabinet that they could not coerce Ulster.'

That entry in Sir Henry Wilson's diary was written a few weeks before the Curragh mutiny. He had been back at his office when the mutiny took place. He had not told the Cabinet – and he would have taken pains to impress upon them that the fact was of no real importance – that by this time considerably more than one hundred thousand Volunteers had already been enrolled in the rest of Ireland. What did they matter anyhow? They had no arms and they had only lately begun to drill. The administration in Dublin Castle was still safely in the hands of Carson's friends.

A new form of pressure was about to be applied to the Liberals, in case they were not yet sufficiently intimidated. The House of Lords was getting ready to amend the Annual Army Bill. If necessary, they were prepared to throw out the Army Bill. Bonar Law sent for Henry Wilson, and they had a long conversation at Bonar Law's house, in which Wilson's consent was obtained to Bonar Law's proposal for yet another move. The House of Lords was to shelve the Home Rule Bill indefinitely by carrying an amendment that no force should be used against Ulster until after a general election. There was

no intention as yet of any compromise on the Unionist side. Ulster was the rock upon which Home Rule was to be wrecked completely. Carson and his friends had said so a thousand times; and they had scarcely given a thought to any scheme for a separate Government in Ulster.

'This gets over my difficulty,' Henry Wilson wrote. 'We discussed it all backwards and forwards, the handle it will give against the Lords, the possibility of no army remaining after 30th April, the effect abroad; and I am convinced that Bonar Law is right. Desperate measures are required to save a desperate situation. I made one suggestion to Bonar Law which he approved. I said that before the Lords touch the Army Annual Act he (B. L.) should get up in the House of Commons and ask Asquith the point-blank question: "Are you going to use the Army to coerce Ulster or are you not?" As Asquith is sure to return an evasive answer, Bonar Law must anticipate by saying, "There are three ways of answering the question, *i.e.* Yes - No - No Answer." In the event of No Answer, the inference will be "Yes," and Bonar Law should say that if Asquith gives an evasive answer it will be counted by him and his party and the country as meaning "Yes."'

So the secret consultations between the Orangemen in the War Office and the politicians had been proceeding for months past. The crisis that arose with the Curragh mutiny had been long foreseen and prepared for by the Orangemen in the War Office. General Gough's brother had summoned Wilson in hot haste from the War Office to Eaton Place to concert further conspiracies as soon as news of the Curragh mutiny arrived, and before it yet reached Wilson officially as D.M.O. 'We must steady ourselves a bit,' was Wilson's entry in his diary at the end of that exciting day. He had gone back to the War Office and found the telegrams from the Curragh waiting for him on his table.

He went round to Bonar Law's house at breakfast-time next morning, and reported that he had been backed up by Sir William Robertson 'like a man,' Sir John French, with his soldier's conscience, had been much more difficult to deal with.

Even Colonel Seely, as War Minister, had been delightfully complacent, and had appealed to Henry Wilson to put in writing what the Army would agree to. Wilson's memorandum on the subject had been displeasing to 'Asquith and his crowd.'

There had been nothing for it but to renew the bullying of Seely as a sentimental War Minister. 'I told him the same story as I had told French,' Wilson wrote in his amazing diary – 'no officers on the General Staff at the War Office, the regiments depleted of officers, a hostile Europe, our friends leaving us because we have failed them, and our enemies realising that we had lost our Army.' Yet even Seely had 'remained untouched' while the hysterical Director of Military Operations – who knew more than almost anyone else at the War Office of how near the German preparations for war were to completion – persisted in dictating politics to the Cabinet. The Curragh mutineers were at his back, and he and Gough even collaborated in drafting the memoranda which secured their reinstatement.

After Seely's resignation, Henry Wilson had 'wired Hubert at midnight to stand like a rock.' 'This is vital,' he added in his diary. 'Any false move on our part would be fatal. So long as we hold the paper we got on Monday we can afford to wait and sit tight.' And on the following day Sir John French was to be confronted by 'all Commanders-in-Chief and Divisional Commanders coming into the C.I.C.'s room and telling him that the Army was unanimous in its determination not to fight Ulster.' On 28th March, when the turmoil had all but subsided, and Asquith had made a solemn declaration intended to restore public confidence, Henry Wilson was still able to record triumphantly in his diary that there was 'absolutely nothing in (Asquith's statement) which in the faintest degree changed the situation.' Two months later, Sir Edward Carson proclaimed gratefully at a public meeting in London on 21st May that 'It was those brave generals at the Curragh who saved them in the present crisis.'

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Not for many years was the inner history of those secret consultations at the War Office to be made public, when Henry

Wilson's diary was published. But the trend of developments was quite evident at the time. The Army was dictating politics to the Cabinet with an effrontery which was scarcely less amazing than its success. The Carsonites in Ulster felt that they could do absolutely what they wished in defiance of the law.

The next step was to impress upon English public opinion that the Ulster Volunteer Force was fully armed. To bring in a large cargo of rifles in spite of the Arms Proclamation was the surest way of achieving that effect upon public opinion; and the Orangemen did not hesitate to apply to German sources for the rifles that they intended to land in Ulster. Major Crawford – who had already proclaimed his own readiness to transfer his allegiance to the Kaiser if Parliament should attempt to establish Home Rule in Ireland – was in charge of the gun-running operations.

On 24th April a steamer carrying rifles and ammunition arrived without any hindrance in Larne harbour, in County Antrim. Part of the cargo was unloaded at Larne, part was trans-shipped, still without any interference, to another boat which sailed to Donaghadee; and the steamer then went on, still without molestation, to Bangor, where the remainder of the cargo was similarly unloaded among waiting Volunteers. The three towns were completely surrounded for the purpose and mastered by the Ulster Volunteers, and the cargo was conveyed under their protection by motor cars to all parts of East Ulster.

Next morning the news was in all the newspapers. Mr. Asquith, in the outraged majesty of a Minister who was at once head of the Government and Minister for War, could do no more than characterise the episode as a 'gross unprecedented outrage.' He added that the Cabinet 'would take without delay appropriate steps to vindicate the authority of the law.' Henry Wilson and his friends laughed uproariously at the rhetorical phrases which they had expected. The Government had not the least difficulty in ascertaining the responsible persons who had negotiated the purchase of the cargo, but it could do nothing.

Two years later, in evidence before the Hardinge Com-

mission on the Easter insurrection in Dublin in 1916, Sir James Dougherty of Dublin Castle was to state openly that 'the rifles, bought in Hamburg, were landed here (in London); they were paid for by an English cheque; and the persons most intimately concerned with the reception and distribution of the imported arms were already closely connected with a political organisation in London.'

No less than forty thousand rifles had been successfully landed, and they were German Mausers! The episode had so profound an effect upon Casement's subsequent activities in connection with Irish politics that the circumstantial description of it which was published in *The Times* on the following day deserves quotation. 'The whole operation,' said *The Times*, 'was carried out with the greatest efficiency in detail. The towns and harbours at which the arms and ammunition were to be landed were cut off from all communications with the outside world for a space of from four to six hours. The local police in some, if not all, of these places were surrounded by a superior force, and with the coastguards and Customs officials, prevented from taking any action. All roads leading to the respective disembarking centres were picketed by strong guards of Volunteers, who allowed no one to pass without a permit, and thus drew a protecting chain around each centre. The telephone and telegraph wires were temporarily put out of working order. In short, strict military discipline was imposed for a considerable time, and in certain prescribed areas no movement of any kind nor any communication with outside sources was allowed.'

A further illuminating sidelight on the amazing proceedings was supplied by the Special Correspondent of the *Daily Mail* on the following day. 'An interesting detail of Friday night's arrangements,' he wrote, 'linked up the occasion with the events at the Curragh which caused so much excitement five weeks ago. The password chosen was "Gough."'

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One immediate effect of the Larne gun-running – for which Sir Edward Carson defiantly announced in the House of

Commons a few days later, that he took full responsibility – was to stimulate enormously recruiting for the Irish Volunteers. The Curragh mutiny had given an impetus to the movement which brought its strength up to considerably larger dimensions than that of the Ulster Volunteer Force. In Ulster alone there were fully fifty thousand Irish Volunteers enrolled as against the one hundred thousand who had been drilling under the command of Lieutenant-General Richardson. And it was Mr. Joseph Devlin, as leader of the Nationalists in Ulster, who first became convinced that the time had come when the Parliamentary Party must initiate negotiations at once to obtain control of a movement which already dominated Irish politics.

Through Devlin the negotiations were started with McNeill and Kettle, the two secretaries and chief organisers of the Volunteers; and it was decided, some weeks before the Larne gun-running took place, that McNeill and Roger Casement should both proceed to London to meet Redmond and come to an arrangement for uniting forces with the official Nationalists. Redmond's distrust of the unaccredited body which had brought the new movement to life was still strong. It was plain from the first interview in which McNeill and Casement met Redmond and Dillon and Devlin in conference, that the Party leaders intended to obtain full control. In view of their persistent dislike of the whole agitation, and of Redmond's known aversion towards any adoption of unconstitutional methods, it was by no means sure that the Party would not use any authority which it obtained by the agreement to damp down enthusiasm at once. To Casement particularly that possibility was a prospect that he would not risk incurring.

A meeting was held on the day after the first conference, at Mrs. J. R. Green's house in Westminster, in which Casement and McNeill were joined by a mysterious figure, Mr. Darrell Figgis, whom Mrs. Green had introduced to both Redmond and to Casement. He might be a useful co-operator, and was still sufficiently unknown to escape the attention of the detectives who were constantly shadowing the leaders of the Volunteers. Darrell Figgis was to write¹² afterwards the most complete account

of the transactions that followed, and has recorded his impressions of the afternoon when a momentous decision was made.

Casement especially emphasised the danger that Redmond and his friends would swamp the movement if they came on board; he insisted that the really decisive influence in future must lie with whoever was able to provide and control whatever arms could be obtained. The others agreed with his view; but Mrs. Green, as treasurer of the movement, pointed out the extreme difficulty of raising money to buy rifles on any large scale. Then Darrell Figgis suggested that O'Rahilly, another of the treasurers in Ireland, should be got over from Dublin at once, with all the information that had been collected up to date about addresses on the Continent where rifles could be procured.

Figgis proposed that on the night of O'Rahilly's arrival, he should himself sail for the Continent if necessary, and carry out whatever purchase of arms they might be able to arrange. 'It was a grey afternoon,' writes Darrell Figgis in his recollections. 'The windows gave on to the Thames, and against the grey sky the warehouses on the southern bank were, through the gathering mist, lined in an outline of darker grey and black, the tall chimneys lifted above them. The tide was out, and beside the distant quayside some coal barges lay tilted on the sleek mud of the river bottom, with their sides washed by the silver waters that raced seaward.

'Against this picture, looking outward before the window curtains, stood Sir Roger Casement, a figure of perplexity, and the apparent dejection which he always wore so proudly, as though he had assumed the sorrows of the world. His face was in profile to me, his handsome head and the noble outline cut out against the lattice work of the curtain and the grey sky. His height seemed more than usually commanding, his black hair and beard longer than usual. His left leg was thrown forward, and the boot was torn in a great hole – for he gave his substance away always, and left himself thus in need, he who could so little afford to take these risks with his health. But as I spoke, he left his place by the window and came forward towards me, his



SIR EDWARD CARSON, K.C., M.P., AND MR F. E. SMITH, K.C., M.P., AT A REVIEW
OF ULSTER VOLUNTEERS IN 1913

(Photograph reproduced by kind permission of the 'Daily Mirror')

face alight with battle. "That's talking," he said, throwing his hand on the table between us.'

To find an agent willing to undertake the risky and delicate task of collecting a cargo of rifles on the Continent, and conveying it surreptitiously across the sea, was at least a step in advance. But the problem of finding the funds still remained. Casement alone still hoped that the money for a really ambitious undertaking could be found. At least £1500 would be needed, and Mrs. Green was only able to find half that sum. It was Casement who found the rest in the following days, by enlisting the sympathy of his friends, the Hon. Mary Spring Rice, Lord Monteagle's daughter, and of Mr. and Mrs. Erskine Childers. They each guaranteed one-third of the balance that was required, in response to Casement's persuasions. Erskine Childers was only known as a prominent young Liberal who had written a very able book on the *Framework of Home Rule*, and as the author of the spy story *The Riddle of the Sands*, but he was persuaded to employ his own yacht and his experience as an adventurous yachtsman, in carrying off the *coup*.

It was while these secret preparations were being completed in London that the Ulstermen were engaged on precisely similar preparations for the gun-running at Larne. When Darrell Figgis and Erskine Childers made their way under assumed names to Hamburg to negotiate the purchase of one thousand five hundred rifles, ostensibly for a group of Mexicans, they were to come on the traces of other mysterious gun-runners already active in the same port.

Meanwhile the negotiations⁸ with Redmond for a joint control of the Irish Volunteers had reached their conclusion. A provisional offer that the authority should be vested in a small committee, which would have included Casement as a representative of the original group, had broken down; and the upshot was a large committee to include a great number of orthodox politicians who were nominated by Redmond personally. No word had yet been divulged to the Parliamentarians of the plan for landing a cargo of arms; and even after the Ulstermen's bold

gun-running at Larne, the arrangements proceeded without any consultation with Redmond.

Casement had been the chief author of the plan, and he had found the money. He was now busily engaged in encouraging a really sympathetic understanding between Redmond and the Provisional Committee. But already he had decided that his own activities must involve a journey to America. There he would raise funds for more secret gun-running, and form personal contact with the leaders of the extreme Nationalists among the Irish-Americans. The thought of war in Europe obsessed him since his stay in London, and the unexpected paralysis of the British Army as a result of the Ulster agitation had introduced a new factor. He still believed that there would be no war until 1915, but the situation in Ireland had become so charged with electricity that there was no knowing what would happen.

An extraordinary transformation had taken place since he had assisted in launching the Volunteer movement in the previous winter. Now even Redmond had become irrevocably involved in the organisation of a citizen army in Ireland. The new policy had been forced upon Redmond against his own judgment and his principles. He could see no hope of triumph except by constitutional means. A collision between two Volunteer forces in Ireland would mean the defeat of all his dreams of national unity. It could only produce bloodshed and bitterness that would endure for generations. But the weakness of the Liberal Government had left him no alternative.

The future no longer rested with the Liberal Cabinet; it was the Irish Volunteers who would force the pace. Everything would depend upon how quickly they could be armed, and to obtain arms Casement felt that his own presence was urgently needed in America. But he kept his intentions a complete mystery except among a few intimate friends. To Redmond he wrote a long final letter¹⁰ that he had been ordered a complete rest and must go away for a sea voyage. In the meantime he urged Redmond at all costs to promote unity, while assuring him of a complete desire on the part of his own friends to secure

harmonious co-operation. Only Redmond, he said – and it expressed his real conviction – was in a position to give to the movement the dignity and authority and prestige which it demanded.

In that last letter he put forward one suggestion particularly which reveals the aloofness of his mind and his unreasoning conviction that all Irishmen would, when the time came, unhesitatingly adopt his own views. He impressed upon Redmond the necessity of entrusting the military leadership of the Volunteers to some famous Irish soldier with a great name – someone who would be better known and more widely respected than General Richardson, who had lent his services to the Ulstermen. Redmond alone, he believed, could obtain the co-operation of such a soldier, and he himself suggested a suitable name. General Kelly-Kenny had become a famous figure in the Boer War, and his name would carry far more weight than that of General Richardson. Casement proposed boldly that Redmond should invite him to assume command of the Irish Volunteers.

The suggestion was entirely his own. It showed how little he knew of the mentality of the Volunteers themselves; for they would never have welcomed as their chief a soldier concerning whose political opinions they knew nothing. It showed also his strange conviction that, when war did break out, as he knew it must, even a British soldier of General Kelly-Kenny's antecedents would share his own views and use his position as the commander of the Volunteers to keep Ireland out of the war, and to bargain with the Great Powers for the establishment of an independent Ireland under international guarantees.

It was his last message to the Irish leader, and then he disappeared from the scenes, to travel by devious routes to the United States with the intention of establishing contact at once with John Devoy and the Fenian leaders there. His memorandum about Ireland as a factor in the coming world war had been safely transmitted¹⁰ to the German Ambassador in Washington. It should have long ago been considered by the German Foreign Office. He knew also that his preparations

for the landing of the rifles in Ireland were far advanced. Bulmer Hobson had come back to Ireland from the mission on which his memorandum had been handed to Bernstorff. And now Bulmer Hobson, under the assumed name of Dolan, had been appointed the directing agent from whom the gun-runners were to receive their orders.

Darrell Figgis was already in Germany completing the purchase and conveying the cargo to the North Sea; while Casement's friend, Erskine Childers, accompanied by Mary Spring Rice and by a brilliant young Englishman, Gordon Sheppard (who was afterwards to become a brigadier-general in the British Air Force) were ready on Childers's yacht, preparing to carry out the great *coup* which was to do for the Irish Volunteers what Major Crawford had done for the Ulstermen at Larne. Casement would be in America before the arms could be landed.¹² And whether the Irish Volunteers would be treated with the same forbearance as had been shown to the Ulster Covenanters at Larne, was the question upon which the events of the following months would chiefly turn.

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The story of Casement's voyage from Ireland to the United States and of his subsequent journey to Germany through Norway a few months after hostilities had begun, was set down by himself in his diary when he eventually reached Berlin. By that time the mission which he had undertaken to collect funds in America for gun-making, had developed on startling lines.

'It is not every day,' he wrote¹³ by way of preface to his account, 'that even an Irishman commits high treason – especially one who has been in the service of the Sovereign he discards, and not without honour and some fame in that service. It is true "Colonel" Arthur Lynch, now Loyalist and repentant M.P. for Clare (the "Banner County," as your blatant "Nationalist" Editor loves to call it) did commit treason of a sort in the Boer War – but of so minor a degree that his trial in London and his "Death Sentence" were about on a par with his election for Clare as an "Irish Nationalist" – unreal

shams! I remember the trial – I was in London at the time, and then I thought Lynch was an earnest man and “apologised” for his treason on the ground of his sincerity.

‘I little thought then – it must have been about 1903 or so he stood his trial – that I should go the whole hog myself – and not to a little Boer Republic that had once been British territory but to the mightiest military Power in Europe, whose war to the death with England meant destruction to one or other of the combatants. Lynch’s treason was that of an individual, and, I fear, a self-seeking individual – mine is the premeditated, clearly thought-out treason not of an individual but of a representative of a still remembering people.’

On 2nd July he sailed from Ireland for Glasgow, to embark as a second-class emigrant bound for Montreal. The ship on which he was to travel was the *Cassandra*, ‘name of ill omen,’ he noted in his diary. He had been under observation in Dublin, as all the leading members of the Irish Volunteers had been, especially since the opening months of 1914. His journey to America would certainly have aroused suspicions and he would have met with difficulties there. He decided accordingly not only to reach America through Montreal, but to travel under a partly disguised name, registering himself simply as Mr. R. D. Casement.

He was unrecognised on board; the nearest approach to any recognition was when one of his fellow-passengers inquired whether he was related to the ‘well-known Irish baronet’ of the same name. Casement was still sufficiently care-free to reply that he was a near relative and knew the baronet quite well. The voyage lasted about twelve days; and Casement, with his long experience of travel on many seas, had his first sight of icebergs off the coast of Newfoundland. The voyage had aroused strange memories, for they passed close by the French islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon, to which it had been suggested, after the publication of his Congo report, that he should go as British Consul.

Even the St. Lawrence River revived old memories; for it recalled ‘the vistas of the mighty Amazon – but the Amazon

is a river – a vast flowing sea of fresh water – and this is a gulf of the sea right up to Quebec.’ But Canada was for him only the entrance to the United States for his new adventure. He set off without delay from Toronto to New York, where he had already made an appointment with John Devoy to meet him in his office on the Friday morning. He went straight to the Belmont Hotel and he wandered out next morning to revive old memories of when he had stayed in New York in 1890, all but a quarter of a century ago, and before he had yet entered the British Consular service in equatorial Africa.

He was strolling through the streets when a young Norwegian sailor spoke to him. A strange friendship grew up between them at once which was to have an extraordinary influence upon the two years that even now barely remained of his vagrant life. The fair young man, obviously a foreigner in search of a job, had watched him and summoned up courage to speak to him. They walked on together, and the young man told him his story. His name was Eivind Adler Christensen, and he had run away to sea from his father’s house at Moss in Norway twelve years before, when he was only twelve years old. He had escaped to Glasgow, and from there had travelled for years on various Norwegian steamers as a fireman. Now he was out of work, homeless and almost starving, and he begged Casement to help him. Casement at once gave him money which enabled him to find work in New York.

Next day Casement had his first interview with John Devoy at the office of the *Gaelic American* newspaper. Through Devoy he made the acquaintance of John Quinn, one of the most gifted and most prosperous lawyers in the United States, and a famous collector of books. He met other well-known Irish-Americans who had never ceased to show a practical interest in Irish politics, keeping in touch with the popular leaders in Ireland, subscribing generously to their funds, and using their influence in the States. Bourke Cockran was one of them, and Casement soon met him also. But he was more drawn to Devoy’s associates, the men of extreme Republican views, and especially

towards Joe McGarrity in Philadelphia, who was one of Devoy's ablest disciples.

They knew enough of Casement's public record in the Putumayo to welcome him as a useful recruit to Irish-American platforms, and he had brought introductions from their own friends in Ireland. Before many days had passed he was attending the annual convention of the Ancient Order of Hibernians at Norfolk, Virginia, in company with Bourke Cockran and John Quinn. Patrick Egan and half the celebrities of Irish-American politics were on the platform; and Casement, at all times diffident of public meetings, was pushed forward to be the first speaker at a monster gathering in the presence of many celebrated American orators. He was introduced with full eulogy as one of the pioneers of the Volunteers in Ireland.

The great meeting ended with the usual tumult of applause, and Casement returned to Philadelphia with McGarrity. To him he was at liberty to disclose his excitement as he waited for news of the gun-running that was to take place according to plan at Howth on 26th July. A letter reached him, while he was in McGarrity's house, telling him that his friends, Childers and Conor O'Brien, were already safely on the high seas, with their cargoes on board.

But before further developments could happen there arrived startling news. The Archduke Ferdinand had been assassinated at Sarajevo, and Austria had sent an ultimatum to Serbia. In America the incident seemed only a typical story from the Balkans. It aroused no more interest than would have been caused in London or in Paris by the assassination of a local potentate in any of the South American republics. But to Casement, with his close knowledge of European politics, the event was glaringly ominous, as he counted the hours that must pass before that Sunday when the Volunteers were to march out to Howth, and be confronted with the cargo of arms that he had obtained for them.

Fears for the safe landing of the rifles at Howth swallowed up all other fears for the time. He spent all Sunday, the 26th of July, on tenterhooks, waiting for the hours to pass in McGarrity's

friendly house in Philadelphia. At least the difference in time between the United States and Ireland would shorten the period of waiting. He walked out through the fields in front of McGarrity's house as the hot day grew cooler, to spend the last hours before the long summer evening ended. Unless some accident had occurred, he knew that the *coup* must have already been tried, and that either magnificent success or failure had rewarded his efforts before he left Ireland. Twilight came, and they lay down on the grass together to count the minutes, watches in their hands.

By nine o'clock, when they knew that it was already past midnight in Dublin, news was certain to arrive at any moment in the newspaper offices. They went indoors and waited in growing suspense. At last the telephone bell rang through the house. A call had come through from one of McGarrity's friends on a Philadelphia paper. The cargo of arms had been landed safely after all. But troops had been called out to disperse the Volunteers and had fired on the crowd; and the message reported that they had succeeded in disarming the Volunteers.

To Casement the news was staggering. All his own ingenuity and his success in raising funds for the purchase of the rifles had gone for nothing. His great *coup* had been defeated; a repetition of his efforts would be incomparably more difficult next time. Yet there still remained a dim hope that later news might be more hopeful. At worst the failure had provided him with new ammunition for his propaganda against the Liberal Government, which allowed Carsonites to import arms with impunity, but would not hesitate to fire upon the Irish Nationalists when they organised a counter-stroke to what had been done at Larne.

McGarrity was wild with excitement, and had dashed down to the Hibernia Club, leaving Casement to contemplate the future. Long hours passed before another telephone message came; this time it was from McGarrity himself. The first news had not been true. The Volunteers had not only carried out their gun-running but had saved their arms.

There was little sleep for anyone in the house that night.

At about two in the morning McGarrity arrived home, announcing that he had arranged for a monster meeting of protest against the British Government, to be held at the principal theatre in the city on the following Sunday, 2nd August. The principal speaker at the protest meeting, he had already announced to the newspapers, was to be Sir Roger Casement. In the morning the house was besieged by newspaper reporters. Casement, who had been so shy of public meetings that he would not even make a speech to a small boys' school, was now committed irrevocably to a campaign of platform oratory. Meanwhile he issued an interview to the whole Press. While no one in Europe could think of anything but the sudden mobilisation of every force that seemed to make war inevitable, he was issuing his considered onslaught upon the British Government for its attack upon the Irish Nationalist Volunteers at Howth.

On 2nd August the great protest meeting in Philadelphia was duly held, with Casement as its principal orator. But already the newspapers were filled with more startling and alarming news. Russia, Austria, Germany, France; each had issued immediate orders for the mobilisation of their armies. With a rapidity which forestalled Casement's carefully calculated anticipations of when the inevitable war would come, all Europe was being drawn into the whirlpool.

From hour to hour, while he was organising his protest about the shooting of a few civilians on the quays of Dublin, every nation was watching with bewildered suspense as the convulsions spread from the Balkans across Europe. Edition after edition of the daily and evening newspapers brought some new story of developments that made hopes of reconciliation more remote. Within a week of the night when he and McGarrity had waited impatiently for news of the gun-running that they knew was due to be carried out at Howth, England had played her last card in the effort to avert a catastrophe.

On the day after Casement's protest meeting of the Irish-Americans in Philadelphia, Sir Edward Grey announced to the House of Commons that he had already committed the British Empire to war.

PART IV

GERMANY

'If I fail – if Germany be defeated – still the blow struck to-day for Ireland must change the course of British policy towards that country. Things will never be again quite the same. The "Irish Question" will have been lifted from the mire and mud and petty, false strife of British domestic politics into an international atmosphere. That, at least, I shall have achieved.' – From Roger Casement's diary, 2nd November 1914, on his arrival in Berlin.

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THE war crisis of which Casement had dreamed for years with growing obsession, and which he had regarded as being certain to occur in the following year, had arrived before his own plans were yet complete. Yet what prodigious headway he had made in the eighteen months since his retirement from the consular service and his return to Ireland! He had done more than almost anyone else to bring the Irish Volunteers into existence. He had within the past week provided them with two large cargoes of arms. He knew that Redmond himself was already arranging for the secret dispatch of other cargoes of arms into Ireland.

With the new spirit of combative and self-confident nationalism that the Volunteer movement had aroused, Casement counted fully upon the outbreak of such a popular upheaval in Ireland that a settlement vastly more far-reaching than the Liberal Home Rule Bill would have emerged through the shedding of blood. Twelve months more and events must, he knew, have developed on the lines that he had foreseen. The British Government that he visualised as attempting a new era of coercion would be confronted in 1915 with the inevitable chaos of a world war. Then indeed the supreme opportunity of which he had dreamed would have come at last. The choice between allegiance to a British Government attempting renewed coercion, or an open alliance with Germany, would have been presented to a furious national agitation. Then indeed his plan of an open appeal to Germany for aid would have been practical politics with a vengeance. The British Government would have had to choose between treating Ireland as a hostile country, and conceding political independence as the price of Irish sympathy.

But his whole plan had been shattered by the assassination

at Sarajevo. A Liberal Government was still in office, and still to all appearances engaged in carrying the Home Rule Bill through its last stages. The whole future turned upon how the leaders of the Nationalist party would regard and employ their opportunity. How far – after all those years of patient manœuvring at Westminster – had they retained the pure spirit of Irish nationalism? Was it conceivable that they would let the occasion slip, consigning to perdition the cherished gospel of John Mitchel, that ‘England’s difficulty was Ireland’s opportunity’? Would they be men of sufficient mettle to drive a real bargain with the British Government in the most shattering crisis of England’s history?

To Casement, as he watched the telegrams in those breathless days, the outlook seemed dark as night. There had still been hope in the final efforts of Sir Edward Grey to postpone the upheaval. Even when that last hope vanished, there still remained the possibility that Redmond might seize his chance. Casement waited with incredulous despair to read what attitude he might adopt. Barely two months had passed since he had written to Redmond himself, urging him to throw his whole weight into the Volunteers, promising him every sympathy and support, and even suggesting the name of General Kelly-Kenny as an Irish-born General of great prestige who might yet rally the whole country to the new movement. And now could he believe his senses when he read what Redmond had actually said in the House of Commons?

There were passages in the speech which even Casement or the most extreme Sinn Féiner could have spoken without a qualm. There was doctrine which even John Mitchel or John Devoy would not have repudiated in Redmond’s declaration: ‘I say that the coast of Ireland will be defended from foreign invasion by her armed sons, and for this purpose Nationalist Catholics in the South will be only too glad to join in arms with the armed Protestant Ulstermen in the North.’ Yet in its context that supremely national declaration was transformed. ‘To-day I honestly believe,’ Redmond had announced to a House of Commons waiting on tenterhooks to hear what his

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attitude would be, 'that the democracy of Ireland will turn with the utmost anxiety and sympathy to this country in every ~~and~~ and every danger that may overtake it.' And there had ~~been~~ that further sentence, crushing to all Casement's hopes, when Redmond had proclaimed his own hope, as leader of the Irish Nationalist Party, 'that out of this situation there may spring a result which will be good not merely for the Empire but good for the future welfare and integrity of the Irish nation.'

He could find no consolation in the thought that there had been a ring of Grattan's historic speeches in Redmond's announcement that the Government 'may to-morrow withdraw every one of their troops from Ireland.' It had been the most cherished ideal of the Fenians and of John Mitchel and the Young Irelanders, no less than of Grattan himself, that, through the Irish Volunteers in their resort to arms, the essential community of interests and hopes between North and South might yet find its fulfilment. But how Casement abhorred that miserable assumption that the actions of the Volunteers must depend on what was 'allowed to them' and not upon their own free decision.

Only Casement, and a small group who accepted their political guidance from John Devoy in America, had ever thought of Ireland becoming actively pro-German. Had the War Office encouraged Redmond's efforts, instead of regarding them with suspicion and gradually frustrating them by diverting contingents of Irish recruits to other units than the Irish Army Corps which he had gone far towards raising, the pro-German intentions of Casement and his few sympathisers on the original committee of the Volunteers would have been submerged in a wave of enthusiasm for the Allies.

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For Casement, the pathetic appeals on behalf of 'gallant little Belgium,' which played so large a part in Redmond's recruiting campaign, were full of irony. His own career and reputation as a public man had grown from his exposure of slavery on the Belgian Congo. And when a few weeks later there came to

America the reports of yet another of Redmond's speeches, in which he deliberately identified Irish sympathies with the King of the Belgians, and declared that 'there is no sacrifice which Ireland would not be willing to make to come to Belgium's assistance,' the growing fever of restlessness in Casement's mind reached a climax. He sat down at once to write out an open letter to the Irish people from New York. The letter was dated 17th September, and it was published quickly in America and reproduced in the *Irish Independent* in Dublin.

'As an Irishman, and one who has been identified with the Irish Volunteer movement since it began,' he wrote, 'I feel it my duty to protest against the claim now put forward by the British Government that, because that Government has agreed with its political opponents to "place the Home Rule Bill on the Statute Book" and to defer its operation until after the war, and until an "Amending Bill" to profoundly modify its provisions has been introduced and passed, Irishmen in return should enlist in the British Army and aid the allied Asiatic and European Powers in a war against a people who have never wronged Ireland.

'The British Liberal Party has been publicly pledged for twenty-eight years to give self-government to Ireland. It has not yet fulfilled that pledge. Instead it now offers to sell, at a very high price, a wholly hypothetical and indefinite form of partial internal control of certain specified Irish services, if, in return for this promissory note (payable after death) the Irish people will contribute their blood, their honour, and their manhood in a war that in no wise concerns them. Ireland has no quarrel with the German people, or just cause of offence against them.

'I will not pronounce an opinion upon the British standpoint in this war, beyond saying that the public profession under which it was begun, namely to defend the violated neutrality of Belgium, is being daily controverted by the official spokesmen of Great Britain. The *London Times*, in its issue of the 14th instant, declared that Great Britain would not consent to peace on any terms that did not involve the "dismantling of the German Navy" and the permanent impairment of Germany's

place in the world as a great seafaring nation. That may or may not be a worthy end for British statesmanship to set before it, and a warrant for the use of British arms against Germany, but it is no warrant for Irish honour or common sense to be involved in this conflict. There is no gain, moral or material, Irishmen can draw from assailing Germany. The destruction of the German Navy, or the sweeping of German commerce from the seas, will bring no profit to a people whose own commerce was long since swept from land and sea.

‘Ireland has no blood to give to any land, to any cause, but that of Ireland. Our duty as a Christian people is to abstain from bloodshed: and our duty as Irishmen is to give our lives for Ireland. Ireland needs all her sons. In the space of sixty-eight years her population has fallen by far over four million souls, and in every particular of national life she shows a steady decline of vitality. Were the Home Rule Bill all that is claimed for it, and were it freely given to-day, to come into operation to-morrow, instead of being offered for sale on terms of exchange that only a fool would accept, it would be the duty of Irishmen to save their strength and manhood for the trying tasks before them, to build up from a depleted population the fabric of a ruined national life.

‘Ireland has suffered at the hands of British administrators a more prolonged series of evils, deliberately inflicted, than any other community of civilised men. To-day, when no margin of vital strength remains for vital tasks at home, when its fertile fields are reduced by set design to reproducing animals and not men, the remnant of our people are being urged to lay down their lives on foreign fields in order that great and inordinately wealthy communities may grow greater and richer by the destruction of a rival’s trade and industry. Had this war the highest moral aim in view, as its originators claim for it, it would still be the duty of Irishmen to keep out of it.

‘If Irish blood is to be “the seal that will bring all Ireland together in one nation, and in liberties equal and common to all,” then let that blood be shed in Ireland, where alone it can be righteously shed to secure those liberties. It was not Germany

who destroyed the national liberties of the Irish people, and we cannot recover the national life struck down in our own land by carrying fire and sword into another land.

'The cause of Ireland is greater than the cause of any party; higher than the worth of any man; richer in its poverty than all the riches of Empire. If we sell it now, we are unworthy of the name of Irishmen. If to-day we barter that cause in a sordid bargain, we shall prove ourselves a people unworthy of freedom, a dwindling race of cravens from whose veins the blood of manhood has been drained. If to fight now is our duty, then let us fight on that soil where so many generations of slain Irishmen lie in honour and fame. Let our graves be in that patriot grass whence alone the corpse of Irish nationality can spring to life. Ireland will be "false to her history, to every consideration of honour, good faith, and self-interest" if she now willingly responds to the call of the British Government to send her brave sons and faithful hearts to fight in a cause that has no glint of chivalry or gleam of generosity in all its line of battle. If this be a war for the "small nationalities," as its planners term it, then let it begin, for one small nationality, at home.

'Speaking as one of those who helped to found the Irish Volunteers, I say in their name that no Irishman fit to bear arms in the cause of his country's freedom can join the allied millions now attacking Germany, in a war that at the best concerns Ireland not at all, and that can only add fresh burdens and establish a new drain in the interest of another community, upon a people that has already been bled to the verge of Death.'

Casement's letter did not appear in the *Dublin Irish Independent* until 5th October. He could have no illusions as to how it would be received by his former colleagues in the employment of the Foreign Office, whatever he may have thought about the possibility of its influencing Redmond and the orthodoxy of the Irish party. Its publication was a clear and open intimation to Whitehall that Casement had burnt his boats and was preparing to throw his personal influence and energies against the Allied cause. It was read with astonishment in the

Foreign Office, and immediately delated to Sir Edward Grey.

He was already aware of Casement's increasing hostility to England, but to Grey personally Casement's complete *volte face* after the outbreak of war was a shock which he could explain only by assuming that Casement had lost his reason. The Foreign Office had long experience of the eccentricities and irritability of diplomats and consuls whose lives had been spent in tropical climates. But this open assertion of treasonable intentions went beyond anything in his previous experience.

He lost no time in announcing his own attitude towards the matter by a personal letter addressed to Casement himself: –

'Sir' (wrote Arthur Nicholson, the permanent head of the Foreign Office, under his instruction), 'the attention of the Secretary of State has been called to a letter dated New York, 17th September, which appeared in the *Irish Independent* of 5th October over your signature. The letter urges that Irish sympathies should be with Germany rather than with Great Britain and that Irishmen should not join the British Army. As you are still liable, in certain circumstance, to be called upon to serve under the Crown, I am to request you to state whether you are the author of the letter in question.

'I am, Sir,

'Your most obedient humble Servant,

'A. NICHOLSON.'

To that letter Casement sent no reply.

There had been many startling developments before it reached him. Within a few days of its dispatch from the Foreign Office, Roger Casement had already arrived in Berlin. He had left America nine days before it was written. On the day itself Casement had landed in Norway in a Norwegian vessel, which had been stopped on the voyage and brought back to Stornoway by a British warship, without his identity being discovered. His indignation at the recruiting campaign which Redmond had inaugurated in Ireland had risen to a pitch which broke down

all self-control. He decided to go straight to Germany on a political mission upon his own responsibility. With credentials from the German Ambassador, Bernstorff, in Washington, he set out in disguise and armed with a false passport, before he had even made up his mind what purpose his mission to Germany was to serve.

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Even though he had not received that terse reminder from the Foreign Office concerning his obligations towards the British Government 'in certain circumstances,' Casement knew well that his movements would be watched with constant scrutiny. He had been barely three months in America before his departure in disguise on 15th October; but he had been increasingly conscious that detectives were continually watching him. He could not have expected to escape such attention, in view of his openly conducted propaganda against the British Government and his personal communications with the German Ambassador and his agents.

Immediately after the outbreak of war he had arranged with his friend, Professor Kuno Meyer, the Professor of Celtic Studies at Liverpool University, for the re-publication of his own articles concerning Ireland's position in relation to the next war. They had, between them, produced the articles in pamphlet form in America and Germany simultaneously, under the arresting title, 'Ireland, Germany, and the Freedom of the Seas: A Possible Outcome of the War of 1914: To Free the Seas Free Ireland.' The pamphlet proclaimed openly in its preface that 'the whole six parts furnish in outline the case for a German-Irish alliance as this presented itself to the writer's mind when the world was still at peace. It was the writer's intention to show in succeeding chapters how the vital needs of European peace, of European freedom of the seas, and of Irish national life and prosperity were indissolubly linked with the cause of Germany in the struggle so clearly impending between that country and Great Britain. The war had come sooner than was expected. The rest of the writer's task must be essayed not with the author's pen, but with the rifle of the Irish Volunteer.

As a contribution to the cause of Irish freedom this presentment of the cause for Germany, friend of Ireland and foe of England, is now published.'

Though Casement never suspected it for a moment, some inkling of the plan which he had already in contemplation, of undertaking Irish Nationalist propaganda among the Irish prisoners of war, had already come through to Whitehall by the interception of a coded message¹⁴ from the German Ambassador in Washington to his own Foreign Office in Berlin. 'The decisive point seems to me to lie,' cabled Bernstorff, 'in the question whether any prospect of an understanding with England is now in view, or must we prepare ourselves for a life and death struggle? If so, I recommend falling in with Irish wishes provided that there are really Irishmen who are prepared to help us. The formation of an Irish legion from Irish prisoners of war would be a grand idea if only it could be carried out.' The British Foreign Office already guessed what proposals Casement, with every appearance of strictest secrecy, was preparing to convey to the German Government after his arrival in Berlin. He had sounded Bernstorff and obtained his blessing for his plans. But he did not know – though Whitehall knew it before he had even left the United States – that while Bernstorff was disposed to welcome the formation of an Irish Legion from among the Irish prisoners of war, he would welcome it only upon condition that some understanding with England to make peace was not already in preparation.

There had been neither doubts nor misgivings in Casement's mind when he made his decision to reach Germany in disguise. But he knew that he had burned his own boats, since the publication of his pamphlet in collaboration with Kuno Meyer. He had deliberately discarded the anonymity which had hidden the authorship of his articles on 'Ireland, Germany, and the Next War.' For that act alone he knew that he must now be prepared to face trial for high treason, if by any mischance he should fall into English hands before the conclusion of a war in which he counted upon a German victory.

To go to Germany could only add to an offence already

committed against British law, which was grave enough to incur the most drastic penalties. But to go there otherwise than in disguise would have been madness. That he could reach Germany was by no means impossible. His Irish-American friends, and especially John Devoy, had made a fine art of international intrigue. There would be no difficulty in obtaining a false passport by which he could reach some neutral country, and a certain Mr. James . . . of New York was willing to lend one. The immediate problem was to choose a route to Europe which was likely to permit of escape from British patrols. The North Sea would be dangerous ground if any word of his departure from America should reach Whitehall when he was on the high seas.

Norway was the obvious route by which it would be easiest, by keeping far to the north, to steer clear of British warships. Through Norway many Germans were already making their perilous way home in various disguises on board Norwegian steamers. By a heaven-sent coincidence, Casement reflected, he had befriended that young Norwegian sailor who had spoken to him as he wandered through the streets of New York on the first day of his arrival in the United States. Adler Christensen had found work with Casement's assistance. He had grown attached to his picturesque benefactor, and he accepted gladly an offer of employment as Casement's travelling companion and servant as a means of returning to visit his own people at Moss in Norway.

For two days after their tickets had been booked by an agent of the Austrian consulate, Casement went into hiding in New York, staying in a different hotel as Mr. R. Smythe of London. On the morning of Thursday, 5th October, the hotel staff were unaware that a dramatic departure was taking place when a tall, dark man, clean-shaven and unrecognisable as the black-bearded Englishman called Smythe, made his way out of the hotel, unnoticed, by the back stairs. 'Mr. Smythe' had left word with the hotel staff that he was going on that day to Chicago, and in Chicago on the same day the manager of the La Salle Hotel had made everything ready for the arrival of Sir

Roger Casement, who had telegraphed for rooms there, and was expected on important political business.

So his traces had been covered. No one asked any questions when Mr. James — of Orange County, New York, stepped on board the Norwegian steamer *Oskar II* about midday, accompanied by a tall, dark, clean-shaven friend, who had come to see him off to Europe. Nor did the ticket-collector on the gangway notice that it was Mr. James — of New York who came off the ship before she sailed, and that it was his tall, dark friend who remained on board, having borrowed his passport to make the journey.

The ship was bound for Copenhagen, but was to make two calls in Norway at Christiansund and Christiania. As the passengers sorted themselves out, and the various emigrants who had disguised themselves in the hope of getting through Central Europe without detection by the British Fleet emerged self-consciously among the rest, they soon discerned a curious lack of American accent in the tall, dark man who was travelling as Mr. James — of New York. They concluded that he was a British spy, and avoided him carefully. They were to be more puzzled as to his real identity before their voyage ended; and it boded ill for the success of Casement's mission to Germany that it never dawned upon him, until after his arrival in Berlin, that the same suspicion of being a British spy would follow him relentlessly from the moment he set foot in Germany.

Casement's own account¹³ of the dramatic interruption of the voyage as they neared their destination is a curious document. Knowing the danger of being intercepted, he deliberately wrote his account of the sea voyage in a fictitious form, addressing it as a letter to his sister in America. The letter was written throughout in Americanese, and purported to be sent from an American woman, in case it might fall into hostile hands. It was never posted, but was preserved among his papers, and published in the edition of his German diaries that were edited by his friend, Dr. Charles Curry, in Munich soon after the war. The 'letter' gives a detailed account of gossip from day to day

until it reaches Thursday evening, 22nd October, when he notes that the ship changed its course.

'They did not mark the change on the public chart,' he writes, 'but the passengers got word of it quietly. We heard it was to try and escape British cruisers that were said to be lying north of Shetland Islands and all round the Orkneys. Anyway we steered much further north and the dear kind captain, such a nice Dane with a beard just like Cousin Roger's, told me he hoped to go up by the Faroe Islands, and get past those cruisers. All Friday we steamed hard. Saturday, 24th October, was a fine day and the captain said we should sight the southernmost Faroe Island about three o'clock. Well, do you know what we did sight?

'Why, at two o'clock a passenger ran up to me and said, "Oh, there is a big cruiser over here," and I ran to the port, and sure it was – steaming south-west far off, low down on the skyline to the south of us five miles. Of course it had seen us – but it went on in the opposite direction, just as if it were going to America, when suddenly we saw it swing round and come stern or bow first. You could see the change of shape – and then I said, "I guess that cruiser is after us and we'll be overhauled pretty soon." Well, she fired a gun; we saw the puff of smoke, and then we began to turn towards her and she came up out of the skyline fast enough. . . . We were hauled up and the big ship close alongside, like a great granite battery – the seas washing over her, for there was a huge swell and two boats filled with men pulling towards us. Her bows were covered with men, hundreds of them drawn up in three great rows right across the decks standing like statues – and flags and signals flying, and the two boats coming with marines and rifles. I guess they had some trouble getting on board, the sea was very heavy. . . .

'And then they were aboard and came right past me, and do you know, dear Sister, the name of that ship was H.M.S. *Hibernia*. Now when I saw that on the caps of the men I nearly kissed them – but it took my breath fair away. What followed did too. First they cut the Marconi connection slick – right

away the moment they got on the captain's bridge, and then they brought the marines on board with their rifles and a prize crew and a Union Jack to hoist – and they told the captain they were very sorry, but their orders were to seize the ship and take her into a Scotch port to await instructions from London. So there we were, caught on the high seas, far up half-way to Iceland and turned back. We had to alter our course and the officer, a lieutenant-commander, took charge and said he guessed he'd take us to Stornoway in the Island of Lewis off the Hebrides.

'So we steamed away south-south-east, and that Saturday night's dinner was the sorriest, saddest dinner for some of those folk you ever saw. They looked fair scared to death, and when they looked at me – gee, they did look queer. You see, they all thought I had done it. They had it going I compiled reports from the other spies as to all the people who were fakes on board, and that I had sent a wireless to have the *Oskar II* cut off. And no one knew who was who, or who would be taken and who left. I laughed, and one poor old German nearly had a fit and came to tell me he loved the British.

'We got into Stornoway just at sunrise – a glorious sunrise, I was up to see it – on Sunday morning (25th October) and then I saw the Hebrides and all manner of strange islands and cliffs – just like sharks' teeth – jutting up to right and left, and do you know it felt just like as if we were really going into a shark's jaws! I had that feeling. They anchored us off Stornoway, and we saw four captured steamers inside the harbour. The officer went ashore in a tug, "BC 169," I remember, and said he would come back with orders later on after he had heard from London and reported his capture.

'The day passed very drearily on board. We knew it was Sunday – a Scotch Sunday. You could hear the Sabbatarian sanctity of those islands all around us, and I guessed they were eating heavy Sunday dinners in London and would be slow answering. At 6 p.m. we had still no news, and that being our last night on board – if we had gone on our regular course, it was the "Captain's dinner" of farewell – and the tables covered

with good things and flags for each passenger of their country. I got a fine American flag in my napkin, and I've kept it as a souvenir. I guess no one slept much that night. Some of the German ladies were crying and I was very sorry for them.'

Through the following Monday the ship still lay in Stornoway. In the continuation of his fictitious letter to his sister Casement describes the panic among the Germans on board. Another Norwegian boat was released during the morning, and they watched her steaming away, wondering what their own fate would be. Before midday the officer had returned on board with orders that six German men were to be seized at once as prisoners. Two of them were stowaways, two more were members of the crew, and the other two were the chief band-master of the ship's band and the second cook.

It was three in the afternoon when Adler Christensen came to rouse Casement, while he dozed in his cabin, to announce the tremendous news that the ship was about to be released. No time was lost in getting away, and as they steamed north at full speed, Casement could come on deck and breathe the strong sea air as a free man once more. Then fear suddenly rushed back as once again the engines slowed down, and a torpedo boat made them stop. For an awful half-hour it looked as though Casement's presence had been detected, and another boarding would take place until he was discovered and carried off as a prisoner.

But luck still favoured him; the steamer was not even boarded but allowed to continue on its way after it had given its name. 'They had had eight battleships or cruisers out looking for us,' Casement adds in his letter, 'right up to the 63rd parallel of North latitude. So we could not have got through without being sighted by one of them – and by good luck it was the *Hibernia* captured us. I felt there was a fate in it.'

On board he noticed that feeling towards himself had suddenly changed. He had taken up a collection for the six unfortunate Germans who had been captured, and his doing so had cleared him from the lingering suspicion of being a British spy. All through the day and the following night they steamed

on, till in the evening about sunset they entered the Fiord of Christiania where at last, in clear territorial waters, they could breathe again and know that no cruiser could now follow them. Fog delayed them for many hours, and it was midnight before they could land.

But at long last they drew up safely alongside the quay, and were greeted by news that made Casement's heart leap for joy. De Wet and Beyers had, they learned, joined Maritz in the rising in South Africa. Before he landed, he had the satisfaction of seeing some of the Germans and Austrians who had dodged him so anxiously on the boat, in the belief that he was a British spy, drink champagne to the toast of the South African Republic.

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It was in the small hours of 29th October that Casement, with his beard shaved off and escorted by his Norwegian servant, descended the gangway of the *Oskar II* and made his way to the Grand Hotel. Neither he nor his servant could speak German, and they had an embarrassing prospect before them as they contemplated the next stage of their journey to Berlin. But a Norwegian servant was a great asset in Christiania, and his hopes soared after the excitement and the trepidation of the previous days, in which he had feared from hour to hour that his identity might become known while he was on the high seas. His success in escaping from Stornoway seemed to prove that his whereabouts was still unknown, even though the British Secret Service agents in America must have long ago realised that he had deliberately put them on to false clues before he sailed. More than fourteen days had elapsed since he had left New York, and there had been time for telegraphic messages to be sent all over the world to watch for him on every suspicious ship. But at last he was safely landed in a neutral country, with only a few hundred miles of railway journey to cover before he crossed the German frontier, armed with his credentials for the German Foreign Office and his false American passport. That night at least he could sleep, and he woke refreshed on Thursday morning.

His first action was to send a cablegram to the owner of the American passport announcing his safe arrival, and at eleven he was already on the doorstep of the German Legation in Christiania, accompanied by his sailor servant, who had made for him the few purchases he required on the way. His nerves were still all on edge after the strain of feeling himself hunted for the previous days; and as he emerged from a shop where Adler Christensen had made his purchases, he had observed someone watching him whom he suspected at once of being a detective. He told his servant to watch the man, and his suspicions deepened when he found that he was being followed. The hunted feeling gripped him again, though he could now feel himself to be in safety.

He entered the German Legation, and presented the cipher letter from the German Ambassador in Washington which was to request Count von Oberndorff to give him facilities for entering Germany. To decipher the letter would, he knew, involve delay, and he was not surprised when the German Minister asked him to go back to his hotel and call again on the following morning to collect the papers that would ensure his safe passage to Berlin. He returned accordingly to spend the afternoon in writing at the Grand Hotel, and told Adler Christensen to go out to do more shopping and to return without fail not later than half-past five.

He was still writing in the afternoon when Christensen burst into his room in strange excitement, with a startling story that immediately confirmed his suspicions that he was being closely watched by British agents. Christensen had left his room at two, and on going down to the hall of the hotel had soon been addressed by a stranger who spoke English fluently and suggested that they should go for a stroll together. He had been warned already by Casement that he might be molested by detectives, and with the warning in mind he had consented to go out for a walk with this inquisitive stranger.

Events had then followed with a startling rapidity which left him in no doubt as to the intentions of his new acquaintance. The stranger had said that he would hail a taxi, and in answer to

his summons a large private car had, he reported, driven up at once with a chauffeur in private livery, and the chauffeur had been directed to drive to No. 79 Drammensveien. They drove there accordingly and a footman had opened the hall door. Thereupon the stranger had gone immediately into a room opening off it, and had emerged with a short gentleman with greyish-black hair and partly bald.

Making no pretence at mystery, the detective had announced blandly: 'This is the man.' The short man had invited Adler Christensen to come with him upstairs. It looked as though the house belonged to him, for both the footman and the man who had brought Adler Christensen to the house treated him with marked deference, and when Christensen followed him upstairs to his study, the gentleman determinedly locked the door and politely requested Casement's servant to sit down.

Finding himself thus interrogated behind locked doors within a few minutes of having left Casement's own room in the Grand Hotel, Christensen was not surprised that after a few preliminary questions about the voyage from America, he should be asked point blank whether he had known a 'tall dark Englishman' on board. He replied that he knew no such Englishman, but that he did know an American answering to the description whose acquaintance he had made in New York.

'You mean Mr. —,' his questioner went on, pretending to know the name, and waiting for Christensen to supply it. But the sailor-servant was clever enough to avoid the trap, and replied that he had forgotten the name for the moment. The tall, dark gentleman, he said, had in any case gone away by now. But the little grey-haired man had evidently his suspicions as to Christensen's truthfulness, and he inquired pointedly whether he had done well in America. He followed the question immediately by saying again that he would much like to know the tall, dark gentleman's name and address, and he repeated the inquiry and the suggestion significantly several times.

Christensen had declined to give any further information, and he had then been shown out of the house as quickly as he

had been brought there. He went straight back to the hotel to report to his employer what had happened. Casement, with a growing sense of personal danger, demanded a copy of the local directory and discovered within a few minutes of Christensen's return that the house to which he had been taken was none other than the British Legation. There was danger unquestionably. Casement's identity had clearly been discovered, and as a former Consul himself, he was painfully aware of the risks incurred by travelling with a faked passport.

The British Legation, if it could only run him to earth, might have no power to secure his arrest. But there was a strong chance that the British Minister might be able, by prompt action, to have him held up in Christiania while inquiries were being made concerning his passport. There was not a moment to lose, and he must urge the German Minister to make it possible for him by any means to leave Norway on the following day. He wrote a few lines at once to von Oberndorff for Christensen to take to him, imploring the German Minister to give him an interview at some place other than the German Legation before nightfall. Not for nothing had Casement learned the arts of intrigue and of secret messages in his campaign against the rubber merchants of the Congo and the Amazon. It was not the first time that his own life had depended on the ingenuity with which he could baffle pursuit. He gave close instructions to Adler Christensen to evade detection on his way to the German Legation; and after boarding three different trams in opposite directions, the bewildered Christensen arrived at the Legation with Casement's urgent message. He succeeded in delivering it personally to the Minister, to whom he gave a lurid account of his own adventures at the British Legation during the afternoon.

The late autumn evening had settled down before Adler Christensen returned in triumph bearing a message from von Oberndorff. He had agreed to meet Casement at the German Consulate at seven o'clock. Once again they set out together, feeling that they were being watched on every side; as they hailed a taxicab they saw they were being followed by the same

detective who had spoken to Christensen in the hall of the hotel and had brought him to the British Legation.

Casement's nerves were on edge, but his resourcefulness did not fail him. The taxicab had to pass down several side streets, and opening the door of the cab swiftly as they were rounding a corner, Casement slipped out, leaving the car to drive on with Adler alone, while the British Legation's agent continued his pursuit. Hailing the first taxi he saw, Casement drove on alone at all speed to the German Consulate, and there found von Oberndorff waiting for him as had been arranged. He had telegraphed to Berlin for instructions from the Foreign Office, he explained at once, but he could do nothing until further orders reached him. The reply might come almost at any moment during the night, and all he could do was to let Casement know as soon as his own instructions had arrived.

Dejected and full of anxiety, Casement could do nothing but return to his hotel. Adler Christensen was there when he got back, and told him at once that he was convinced that detectives were watching every approach to the hotel. Another stranger had spoken to him during Casement's absence while he was dining, had offered him two bottles of beer, and told him with a significant emphasis that English gold had never been quoted at such a high rate of exchange as now. Casement's gloom deepened as he listened, and in his bedroom upstairs, he devised a new plan for the following day. To stay in Christiania had, he believed, become too risky already, and he decided that the only safe course was to proceed at once towards the German frontier by motor car. By midnight he had already completed his arrangements, and Christensen had been instructed to order a car early in the morning, when a porter came to his room with a message that a Mr. Hilmers 'from the German Legation' desired to see him.

Was this yet another spy sent to disturb his plans? Casement received him with cold suspicion, but was satisfied before long that the urgent request that he should stay quietly in his hotel until the following day was genuinely sent by von Oberndorff. The permit for Berlin was sure to come, and he could then go on

by train either by Sassnitz or by Copenhagen in the late afternoon. Casement agreed, and cancelled his arrangements for an escape by car in the early morning.

That night he never slept, and as the dawn broke, he looked out wearily from his hotel window and saw one of the detectives on duty prowling outside. The detective scarcely troubled to conceal his purpose, only shifting his position in the street slightly from time to time. The slow hours dragged by as light came, and before seven the same emissary from von Oberndorff had come again. A telegram, he announced, had been received from Berlin, and von Oberndorff would himself arrive at the hotel at noon to make the final arrangements for Casement's departure by the afternoon train.

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Remaining in his room, Casement sent his servant downstairs again at breakfast-time with orders to keep his eyes open. Before midday he came upstairs in a state of great excitement. He had been taken again to the British Legation, and he threw down on Casement's table twenty-five kronen in Norwegian notes which he declared had been paid to him by the British Minister personally, as the first instalment for a service which Christensen had been asked to perform.

How far could his sailor-servant be trusted? Casement wondered for an anxious moment. Then he reflected that the man's fidelity had been proved beyond reproach when they had been on the Norwegian liner, and that he had already entrusted him with his most private papers as well as with nearly £500 in American gold coin. His fidelity was of vital importance, for Casement was increasingly aware of his own risks in attempting to reach Germany in disguise. 'I knew that a British Minister in these circumstances,' he wrote afterwards in a detailed memorandum of the whole story, 'would not use kid gloves in dealing with the man bent on such a journey as mine – and that to stop me reaching Germany would be for him a high duty of his office, and one he would stick at nothing to accomplish.'

Adler's story in the circumstances might well carry conviction

to the least cynical. But Casement himself was outraged to the point of incredulity by learning of the British Minister's attempt to seduce his servant. 'I was hardly prepared,' he wrote afterwards, 'for the outrageous character of the suggestion made to my man, and had I not known this man's character well, I should have given Mr. M. de C. Findlay, His Britannic Majesty's Minister at Christiania, the benefit of the doubt.'

What had happened had been simple enough, in spite of its air of mystery. Casement's Norwegian servant had gone downstairs to breakfast, and as he passed through the hall, a stranger had brushed up against him and murmured rapidly, but with emphasis, that if he would go quickly to the telephone box and call up No. 11460, he would hear something to his advantage. Christensen had followed the advice given; but before doing so, he had deliberately spoken first to the exchange operator, asking that his own conversation, when the number was given, should be overheard and noted down. The telephone-operator must have been disappointed; for the only conversation that ensued was an instruction to Christensen to take a taxicab at once and come to 79 Drammensveien.

He had done so, and the number of the taxicab which he hailed was duly noted down. He had acted upon the telephone invitation without informing Casement any further, and, on reaching the British Legation, he had been met by a gentleman with grey hair who had shown him at once into the same room where the day before he had met the man whom he had believed to be the British Minister.

This time, however, he found a different person in the room, who proceeded to lock the door, exactly as had happened on the previous day, and now announced that he was the British Minister in person. 'A very tall man, clean shaven, except for a short greyish moustache, with his hair brushed back straight, and dressed in a tweed suit,' was the detailed description that Christensen reported after the interview. This time there had been no beating about the bush.

'You are Adler Christensen from Moss,' he informed Casement's servant without further preface, 'and you sent a

telegram from Christiansund to your father, and yesterday you sent a cable from your friend, Mr. James — to New York. Now I want the original of the cablegram to have his handwriting.' He made no further secret about Casement's identity; told the servant that he knew all about him, and that he knew that he was on his way to Germany to conspire with the Germans about Ireland. His frankness disarmed Adler Christensen, as Mr. Findlay even discussed with him the probability of Casement's success as an Irish envoy. 'Did he tell you the Irish have ever succeeded?' he asked the young Norwegian in a friendly manner. 'Well, they will not succeed this time either. He is going to be fooled by the Germans. They don't care anything about Ireland, and they only want to make trouble for England.'

Christensen had obviously succumbed to his attitude of reasonable argument. He had proceeded direct to the point and told Christensen that Casement was quite defenceless, and that no Government could even raise an inquiry if he disappeared. His passport, Mr. Findlay pointed out, was out of order, and the American Legation could not interfere because Mr. James —, to whom the passport belonged, was known to be in his own office in New York. The Germans could not possibly claim him as a subject or even an ally, and the British Government, he told Christensen quite straightly, would most certainly protect and help anyone who put him into their power.

Casement's heart sank when he heard what had taken place; he realised how completely he had made himself dependent upon the fidelity of the young Norwegian sailor, of whom he knew so little. The story lost nothing in the telling, and Christensen reported with due emphasis that Mr. Findlay had told him bluntly that 'if someone knocked him on the head he would get well paid for it.' Christensen, by his own account, had listened without any outburst of indignation, and had only objected that to do as suggested would involve too great a risk. But the British Minister pointed out that in any case the British Government would pay handsomely anyone who would enable them to 'get hold of' Casement.

The Minister did not press the matter, but handed the Norwegian twenty-five kronen in notes 'for his taxicab fares,' and informed him that if, on thinking it over, it seemed worth while to accept the offer of a large reward, he was to return to the British Legation at three o'clock that afternoon.

Such was the startling story with which Christensen returned a few minutes before the German Minister was due to arrive in Casement's room at the hotel. Count von Oberndorff was announced while he was still telling his story. Casement made him repeat his whole narrative in Oberndorff's presence, when the German Minister came in, accompanied by Mr. Hilmers. They were still discussing the matter, and completing the arrangements for Casement's departure to Berlin that afternoon, when another visitor was announced, and Casement found to his joy that his friend Richard Meyer, Professor Kuno Meyer's brother, had just landed after a successful voyage, disguised as a fireman, from Baltimore. The situation was too exciting for Casement, encouraged by the arrival of his friend, to allow matters to rest as they were. He determined that Christensen must return to the British Legation at the time Mr. Findlay had suggested, to obtain further and more definite promises of reward for betraying him.

In the short time that remained, he coached his servant carefully in the part that he was to play. Christensen was to declare his willingness to accept the offered reward, and was to inform the British Minister that Casement was starting for Copenhagen by that evening's train, to spend a few days there on his way to Germany. The valet was to be left at Moss to see his parents, but if Mr. Findlay would pay the high price Christensen was to demand, he was to promise to persuade Casement to take him with him as his trusted servant.

Well before the appointed hour the servant was again on the door-step of the British Legation, having got a taxicab to wait outside. It was nearly five by the time he returned to the hotel. Casement was waiting impatiently, having already booked his place in a sleeping-car to Copenhagen, and having ostentatiously told the hotel staff to forward all letters to him

at the Bristol Hotel in that city. He had begun to wonder seriously whether the young Norwegian had in fact fallen to the great temptation that he had sent him to incur, or whether the British Minister might not have detained Adler. The hour for departure was fast approaching, and he had risen to leave his room, when the valet burst in, bringing with him in triumph a note for one hundred Norwegian kronen, the first instalment of his reward. There was no time for explanations before they left the hotel, and it was not until afterwards that Casement made Christensen write down his own detailed account of what had passed between him and the British Minister. The interview had, by his account, been remarkable. The sailor's command of English was crude at its best, and he had been instructed by Casement to behave with insolence, as proof of his character as a disloyal servant.

'I said that I could probably get Sir Roger to take me on with him,' Adler Christensen stated in the affidavit which Casement got him to make in the following April before the American Vice-Consul in Berlin, 'and that then I might have some chance to carry out the Minister's wishes if it were made worth my while. Mr. Findlay agreed and said I should certainly go on with Sir Roger wherever he might go, and wait for a good chance to get hold of him. He said that of course I could spy upon Sir Roger and find out to whom he wrote, both in America and in Ireland, so that the British Government might get proof against him and against those persons in Ireland who could then be arrested.

'I pretended to agree to these proposals, and then he showed me how I was to correspond with him. He took a piece of writing-paper off his desk, tore off the address at the top, and then with his own hand wrote in printed characters the address of the man with whom I was to correspond. He handed me the paper with these words on it: "Herer Sigvald Wiig, Thorwald Meyersgate 78." The Minister, while he was writing the address, said I, too, was to use printed characters like these in my replies, so that, as he said, the writing could not be traced. He handed me this piece of paper, which I put in my pocket,

and then we bargained for a long time on the pay I was to get.

"This part of our interview was long and sometimes angry. I became rude and insolent on purpose so as to mislead him. He lost his temper once, and said, "What is there to prevent me keeping you here and not letting you out?" to which I replied with a laugh, "Well, that would not do you any good because I have got nothing on me."

"I smoked a cigarette in his face without asking his leave, and I filled my pipe before him. I used bad language several times and swore that I was not going to do anything against Sir Roger for a small sum; that I wanted good money and that I would not act "for a lousy five-dollar note like the one you gave me this morning." He agreed on his "word of honour" to pay me £5000 if I could get Sir Roger into his power. His words were: "If you get him to any place on the Skager-Rack or North Sea we shall have men-of-war ready and will take good care of him." I said that was all right for the British Government and I quite saw they wanted to finish Sir Roger, "who is no fool," but I was not at all sure what I should make out of it. I said, "I expect you mean 5000 kroner." He said: "No. £5000 in gold."

"I asked for some proof or guarantee that the money would be paid to me. He said, "You must trust me. I promise you, on my word of honour, that the day you get him into our hands you shall get £5000. I will telegraph to my Government and see if they will not make it more, but I promise you on my own word £5000." After more heated arguments, in which I continued to behave rudely, I pretended to give in and to agree. It was then arranged that I should be paid for any letters or papers of Sir Roger I could steal or copy and send to the address in Christiania given. He said, "You will be paid for each according to its value, and all would be properly paid."

"I was to write to the address given and send him my own address in Germany, or wherever I might be with Sir Roger. I told him I must hurry back because Sir Roger would be leaving for the train very soon and "I will have to persuade him

to take me on with him and get my ticket for Copenhagen." He said he agreed and pulled out from his pocket a single note for one hundred kronen and handed it to me saying, "This is all the money I have got with me at the moment: besides, you have given me no real information. You have not told me anything that I did not know."

There had been barely time to give Casement an outline of what had passed between them, as he and his servant rushed to the station, having seen the friendly face of the German Hilmers in the hall of the hotel. Casement booked a ticket to Copenhagen for his servant, and they saw with joy that a man whom they believed to be an attaché of the British Legation was waiting to enter the same train. The bluff had worked perfectly, and it had been arranged that in the small hours of the morning Casement was to leave the Copenhagen section of the train and slip into another carriage in the Sassnitz section, where he would join his friend Richard Meyer.

There was little enough likelihood that Casement would sleep till he had reached his destination, but he had told Christensen to keep watch vigilantly and rouse him in time to change his carriage at Engleholm Junction. Evening was falling on that last day of October, as the train steamed out of Christiania; and before night fell, he dozed. He woke with a start in the night and found to his dismay that Christensen also was asleep in the bunk above his. But the guard reassured them, and they remained wide awake for four hours more till Engleholm was reached. Opening their carriage door carefully, they slipped unnoticed into the other section of the train, dashing along the platform with their luggage almost before the train had stopped. A few minutes later they saw the Helsingborg car steam on with its sleeping passengers; and with minds immeasurably relieved, they threw themselves down in their carriage in the other part of the train and slept without waking till they awoke to look out at the clean Swedish town of Malmö.

So they travelled on to Trelleborg to join the railway steamboat and go across the choppy Baltic to Denmark. At Sassnitz at last they touched German soil. The platform was

controlled by officious soldier guards, who, but for Meyer's assistance, would have caused fresh trouble about Casement's continuing his journey. But at last they were on board their train, Meyer and Casement travelling together in a carriage that had been reserved for them, while the young Norwegian travelled in a second-class carriage further down.

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The long journey was near its end, but Casement was to have many glimpses of what difficulties he would still have to face. Other passengers entered the train as they neared Berlin, two of them Prussian Junker landlords, who glared at him and soon began to talk excitedly about the insolence of an Englishman travelling in a German train. Meyer had to do his best to soothe them, saying Casement was an American whom he knew well. It was strange to travel among people whom he so admired and for whose victory he longed, yet who spoke in a language that he could not understand, and who regarded him already with hostility and hatred.

'The hatred against the English,' Meyer explained to him, 'is so bitter that while there is only pity for Belgium, respect for France, frank enmity for Russia, there is for England, "the Cousin," the "good friend," who has betrayed Germany and tried to stab her in the back and to incite the whole world against her, nothing but an extraordinary hatred that exceeds anything ever felt in Germany before for any country with which the Germans were at war.' So much the better, Casement thought, as he observed his new travelling companions. But it was a queer, lonely feeling to be in their midst, travelling with a false American passport, and escorted by a young Norwegian sailor who had already been bribed to betray him – when it was plain that every one he met in Germany was going to imagine him to be an English spy.

Night had fallen, and the railway station glared with electric light when at last they reached Berlin on that Hallow-e'en. An ambulance was drawn up on the platform, and wounded German soldiers were waiting to be taken to hospital. It was

Casement's first real glimpse of war. Meyer had arranged that they were to stay at the Palast Hotel, close to the Foreign Office, but he, too, was behind the times. The taxi driver had looked amazed at his not knowing that the hotel had been commandeered since the outbreak of war. They had to go to the Hotel Continental instead, and there Casement's rooms were booked for him under yet another name. Henceforward he was to be known as 'Mr. Hammond.' The false passport had served its purpose, and could now be sent back to its rightful owner in New York.

The hotel people were impressed by Meyer's portentous warnings of the importance of their American guest, but Meyer implored both Casement and his servant to remain indoors for the present as they would inevitably get into trouble through not speaking German, if they ventured into the streets. Casement had a large room and the young Norwegian a smaller one on the same floor. There was nothing for it but to wait patiently in the evening after a quiet and lonely dinner in the hotel restaurant. At least he could get back to his diary and write down the full story of all his adventures since he arrived – only three days before – at Christiania. 'At last in Berlin!' he wrote, with mingled feelings of triumph and of self-pity. 'The journey done – the effort perhaps only begun. Shall I succeed – Will they see the great cause aright and understand all it may mean to them, no less than to Ireland? To-morrow will show the beginning.'

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All the next day he had to stay indoors in melancholy seclusion at the hotel. Meyer came in twice to report progress. The first call brought discouraging news. Both Bethmann Hollweg, the Imperial Chancellor, and von Jagow, the Secretary of State, were away visiting the French front at Charleville with the Kaiser, and at the Foreign Office only the Under-Secretary, Zimmermann, was left in charge. But in the evening, when Meyer called again, he brought word that Zimmermann would see Casement in the morning at 11.30. He had been told of the Christiania incident, and of the evidence Casement had

brought with him against Mr. Findlay, and Zimmermann had expressed interest in that incident as well as in his Irish mission.

'Anyhow,' wrote Casement after Meyer had gone, 'he showed me plainly I was a welcome guest, and I felt as easy in mind as it is possible to be in so strange a position. Here I am, in the heart of the enemy's country – a State guest, and almost a State prisoner.' It was encouraging at least to notice that the hotel people were deeply impressed. Word had gone round that he was an American millionaire, and he was credited with the possession of a fine steam yacht.

The long Sunday had worn through, and impatience of waiting had led him to write two letters – one of them to Maximilien Harden – which he wished later that he had not posted so soon. But what matter? Morning had come and by eleven his friend Meyer had arrived, ready to bring him down to the Foreign Office to meet Zimmermann, through whom his first steps in his great adventure were to be taken. They went out of the hotel, and together walked on to Unter den Linden, with the elation of two comrades in a great enterprise, noting all that they passed on their way. There, standing in forlorn magnificence, was the deserted palace of the Russian Embassy, closed now for three full months; and as Casement and his friend swung out of the wide avenue into Wilhelmstrasse, they sighted another empty palace, where only a few months before the British Ambassador had held his celebrated interviews with Bethmann Hollweg, and had protested with a final gesture of dismay against the Chancellor's heartfelt appeal that a mere 'scrap of paper' should not be allowed to stand between the friendship of two Great Powers.

They walked on past one great mansion after another in the spacious street as they approached the Foreign Office, and Casement in high spirits observed and noted every detail as he went, to be recorded with minute accuracy in his diary the same evening. The distance was shortening rapidly, and now they had arrived at the threshold of No. 76 – that 'old-fashioned, white, very plain house of the time of Frederick the Great or earlier.' He noted the wooden gateway outside the main

entrance, where they had to ring before the door opened; and then as they entered the great building, they were ushered upstairs where a servant took their coats and hats and sticks.

It was Casement's first introduction to the Berlin Foreign Office. How different it was to that vast building in Whitehall, with its arched corridors and lofty stairs, where he had so many times been a privileged visitor, consulting with either Lord Lansdowne or Sir Edward Grey as one of the men who in distant countries had moulded British foreign policy. What memories the contrast evoked! He had for so many years been the faithful servant of British Foreign Ministers; he had given his whole life and wrecked his health in the British service. Now he was making his way shyly into another diplomatic headquarters where even the language of its masters was unknown to him, and where his offers of service were so obviously occasioning suspicion and distrust rather than the enthusiasm which he had anticipated.

They were ushered into the large waiting-room where great oil-paintings of Frederick, Wilhelm II and of the old Emperor Wilhelm hung on the florid German walls. Then Meyer vanished, leaving him alone while word was being sent to Zimmermann and to the 'head of the English department,' Count von Wedel, that their mysterious, enigmatical Irish visitor had arrived. He was left alone with his thoughts, and they surged upon him while he watched the officials of the Foreign Office flitting in and out through the rooms. Cavalry officers in grey passed through it, and a sense of utter loneliness and strangeness came over him.

That night as he wrote down the record of a momentous day, his thoughts came flocking back again. 'No regrets, no fears,' he wrote¹³ in his diary for 2nd November – and the entry expanded as he wrote, into a full profession of his political faith – 'Well, yes – some regrets, but no fears. I thought of Ireland, the land I should almost fatally never see again. Only a miracle of victory could ever bring me to her shores. That I did not expect – cannot in truth hope for. But victory or defeat, it is all for Ireland. And she cannot suffer from what I do. I may, I

must suffer – and even those near and dear to me – but my country can only gain from my treason. Whatever comes, that must be so. If I win all, it is national resurrection – a free Ireland, a world nation after centuries of slavery, a people lost in the Middle Ages found and returned to Europa. If I fail – if Germany be defeated – still the blow struck to-day for Ireland must change the course of British policy towards that country.

‘Things will never be again quite the same. The “Irish Question” will have been lifted from the mire and mud and petty false strife of British domestic politics, into an international atmosphere. That at least I shall have achieved. England can never again play with the “Irish Question.” She will have to face the issue once for all. With the clear issue thus raised by me, she will have to deal. She must either face a discontented conspiring Ireland – or bind it closer by a grant of far fuller liberties. Coercion she cannot again resume. *Laissez-faire* must go for ever. “Home Rule” must become indeed home rule – and even if all my hopes are doomed to rank failure abroad, at least I shall have given more to Ireland by one bold deed of open treason than Redmond and Company after years of talk and spouting treason have gained from England.

‘England does not mind the “treason” of the orthodox Irish “patriot.” She took the true measure of that long ago. She only fears the Irishman who acts: not him who talks. She recognises only action, and respects only deeds. Those men have killed England with their mouth times and again – I am going to hit her with my clenched hand. It is a blow of sincere enmity based on a wholly impersonal disregard of consequences to myself. Sure alone that it is in truth a blow for Ireland, I should be a traitor did I not act as I am doing. I have often said, and said without the slightest concealment, that if ever the chance came to strike a blow for Ireland, I would do it.

‘Well, the chance has come. I am not responsible for it. The crime is not mine. It is England’s own doing. Grey and Asquith are the real traitors. They have surely betrayed their country and her true interests, to glut the greedy jealousy of the British commercial mind. Germany’s sin has been her efficiency.

They chose to build up a league of enmity against the people they feared to assail themselves, and having triumphed in their tortuous, ignoble secret diplomacy, they joyfully hurried to the encounter when at last sure, as they thought, of their prey. For them, that so-called Liberal Administration, I have nothing but unmeasured contempt, a scorn I cannot express, and for the "governing classes" too of the pirate realm.

'For the people themselves and for many individual Englishmen, I have only deep sorrow, regret, a pity and affection. But as Wilfrid Blunt said to me in Sussex at Newbuildings in May, when I lunched with him and that lovely girl (the granddaughter of Lord Edward Fitzgerald) the time had come for the break-up of the British Empire. Even as he said he hoped now to live to see it, so I hope to be able to do something to bring it about. That Empire is a monstrosity. The world will be the better, the more sincere, the less hypocritical, for a British defeat, for a German victory.'

A messenger entered and requested that Casement should follow him to the Under-Secretary's room. The tall, dark man rose, still disguised by the shortness of his black beard, which had been shaved off before he left America; and in Zimmermann's room, the two men faced each other. Casement's heart rose as he saw the 'fair-haired, very good-natured face,' and responded eagerly to his cordial handshake. Zimmermann welcomed him to Berlin, congratulated him on his safe journey, and with a swift perception of his visitor's real preoccupation at the moment, he 'spoke of the Christiania episode in fitting terms.' 'Dastardly' was the word he chose at once to describe Mr. Findlay's attempt to seduce Casement's young Norwegian servant. 'But it is what the English do,' he added, 'and have always done when their interests are at stake.' And then the great subject of Casement's Irish mission was broached without further delay.

Before dressing in the morning, Casement had drafted a long new memorandum outlining his own ideas, and he had brought this with him to deposit with the German Foreign Office. In it, he deplored the fierce anti-German propaganda

that British agents had been conducting in Ireland, and ridiculed the suggestion that the war was being waged for the protection of small nationalities. The whole propaganda could be discredited, he believed, if the German Government would only issue a clear declaration of its own friendly and sympathetic attitude towards Irish Nationalism. Casement himself had drafted a declaration, which he now boldly suggested that the German Foreign Office should adopt as its own; and to his delight Herr Zimmermann agreed with it in every paragraph, and concluded by saying, with diplomatic emphasis, that he accepted it entirely. The interview was 'more cheering and full of a spirit of goodwill' than he had ever hoped for, and his spirits were high when he parted from the Under-Secretary and was sent on from him to a personal interview with the head of the English section.

Here, too, he was at once captivated by his new acquaintance. 'A man of upright build, frank, with straight brown eyes and a perfect English accent,' greeted him cordially, and engaged in a long and entirely friendly conversation. The ice had been broken, and Casement already felt at liberty to outline his whole scheme in coming to Germany on his Irish errand. He told Count von Wedel of the declaration of Irish policy which he had left with Zimmermann a few moments before, and he launched forth without further hesitation on his ambitious scheme of undertaking Irish Nationalist propaganda among the Irish prisoners of war. He could see at once that the suggestion took effect. Was it too much to hope that Bernstorff had really sent on an outline of the scheme from Washington before Casement sailed? 'It is this step that appeals most to the Germans, I can see,' he wrote that night in his diary. 'They perceive its full moral value to the cause.'

He had discussed the subject freely with Meyer on the previous day, and Meyer had told him with enthusiasm that if he could succeed in undermining the loyalty of the Irish prisoners of war, it 'would be worth ten army corps to us.' Here at any rate was a practical proposal for which the Germans would leave him a free hand. It was more than they could ever

have expected any man to undertake – more, they must have felt even then, than any man in full possession of his wits would ever have dreamed of attempting. But at least it left two points clear once for all. If they had suspected Casement of being a British spy, attempting to win their confidence by claiming to be an Irish rebel, he was undertaking a mission which no British Government was likely to countenance. And at the same time it was an effort volunteered on his own part, which could be judged by its practical success or failure.

What manner of man was he? – von Wedel must have wondered as his straight brown eyes regarded this eager, fever-ridden wanderer who had assumed so fantastic a burden upon his own shoulders, apparently at nobody's instigation but his own. Was he sane or demented? Did he really believe that the Irishmen who had been captured among the first prisoners of the British Expeditionary Force, with their long years of regimental service and their well-known pride in their regimental traditions, would be willing to listen to him if he went among them – urging them to renounce the allegiance of a lifetime and to desert a cause for which their own comrades had died or been mutilated only a few months before, on the battlefields of Flanders and France?

Was it a madman's dream? Had the fevers and the strain of the Putumayo inquiry unhinged his mind? Or was there, indeed, by some remotely conceivable chance, a real possibility that his offer to work against England among the Irish prisoners of war might have some perceptible effect? He was so fastidious in his presentation of the proposal; and von Wedel listened with incredulous courtesy while he talked on, insisting upon the strict limits beyond which he was not prepared to go in undertaking the amazing scheme that he had volunteered to carry through.

'I made it plain beyond all misunderstanding,' Casement wrote that night in his account of their first interview, 'that my efforts with the soldiers must be strictly confined as an effort to strike a blow for Ireland – not an attempt merely to hit England. I described the character of the Irishman and of the

Irish soldier, and pointed out that any Irishman might commit treason against England for the sake of Ireland, but that he would not do anything mean or treacherous. He would put his neck in the noose, as I had done, for love of Ireland; he would not "desert to an enemy" or forsake his own colours merely to assail England. In fact he must have an active cause, not a negative. If thus Germany made the declaration I sought, as to the fortunes and future of Ireland in the event of German victory, I had little or no doubt, scores, perhaps hundreds, of the Irish prisoners would follow me.' So he had talked on while von Wedel listened with polite attention. And then the German had interjected: 'It is clearly the declaration first of all'; and he had summoned Meyer back again, and the three had discussed together what steps should be taken in the first instance to ensure Casement's safety in Berlin. 'Not alone from the British,' he said pointedly, 'but from our own people.'

At least Casement had convinced him that the experiment was worth following further. He had won von Wedel to the point of active co-operation, in sending word to the head of the secret police. He even brought Casement back to the Hotel Continental in his own taxi, and then went on with Meyer for a personal consultation with the Secret Police, to tell them his own candid impressions of this mysterious newcomer in Berlin. For the present at least there was apparently no intention of throwing cold water upon his schemes.

A letter arrived for Casement later in the evening which he opened with eager anticipation. The first day of his mission had been an undoubted triumph. For he found in the large envelope a card signed by the Chief of the Political Police, which stated that 'Mr. Hammond' of New York was 'not to be molested.' Casement's tired face lit with joy as he read the inscription, and he placed it among his papers in his pocket-book, to be carried henceforward wherever he went. Adler Christensen, he learned, need have no special permit, being a neutral subject, and therefore an inoffensive person. But Casement decided that it would be best to wear little American flags in their buttonholes from that day forth; and before the

shops closed on the first evening of his great adventure, Adler Christensen had bought them and they put them in their coats.

After dinner they went out together for a stroll round the city which Casement had never seen before. They walked round the Kaiser's palace and back home down Unter den Linden again. It disappointed Casement as a city, when he compared it with so many wonderful cities that he had seen on both sides of the Atlantic. But what mattered was that it was Berlin, and the headquarters of Imperial Germany at war. 'To-day,' he wrote exultantly, as he finished a long entry in his diary, 'sees me take up a definite position. Mr. Hammond of New York – not to be molested.' It was the last entry he was to make in his diary for more than a fortnight, while he rested from the fatigue and the excitements of his exhausting journey from America.

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As he thought over his own future movements during the days that followed, the difficulties of his situation became more apparent. He had been greatly encouraged by the friendly welcome of Zimmermann, and still more by the frank cordiality of von Wedel. But he had scarcely appreciated before how extremely ambiguous his own position must appear. It was no wonder that they should regard him with suspicion. All his life he had been a man of mystery, even to his own friends. That the Germans should receive him with cordiality when he could not even speak their language, was more than he could reasonably have expected.

He must lose no time in doing something that would prove that their confidence in him was not undeserved. He must be practical above all things, produce some workable scheme that would show results, and at the same time give unmistakable evidence that the British Foreign Office regarded him as an enemy. As he thought things over the way seemed clear enough. He had, at their first interview, put forward his own special scheme for propaganda among the Irish prisoners of war, in the hope even of forming an Irish Legion from those whom he converted.

If he could conceivably succeed in getting them to recruit in the Irish Brigade that he visualised, there would be no doubt whatever as to his usefulness to Germany. Still less would there be any room for misgivings as to his relations with the British Secret Service. It would take some little time to complete the preparations for his work among the Irish prisoners. In the meantime, the incident with Mr. Findlay at Christiania seemed to offer an ideal opportunity for clearing himself of any lingering suspicion.

The strain of his passage through Christiania had racked his nerves fiercely, and he had lost his sense of proportion over the affair to an extent that he did not realise. He had grown to loathe Findlay, and to long with a passionate hatred for some means of retaliating upon him. His whole pent-up hatred of England, which had worked like a fever in his mind ever since he had begun to dabble in Irish politics and while he had been drawn more and more into the vortex of the Ulster crisis, now concentrated upon the British Minister in Norway, until all the energies of his soul were fixed upon the desire to be revenged.

It never occurred to him that the Germans would regard Findlay's effort to waylay him on his way to Germany as a matter of course, or even that the price which Findlay had offered was meagre, rather than large, if the danger to England from Casement's mission were even remotely as great as he himself believed it to be. The loneliness of those first weeks in Berlin, when he was almost friendless and unable even to make himself understood among his German surroundings, added to the disorder of his mind; and the thought of revenge upon Findlay and the British Government was with him night and day, until it grew into an obsession that bore no relation to actual facts.

He saw in the incident the immediate means of proving to the German Foreign Office his own implacable hatred of the British Government, in whose service his own life had been spent. In these long, lonely days when he was secluded in his room in the hotel, he and Adler Christensen spent hours in

talking over every detail of what had happened, and in concocting their own plans for vengeance. The first step would be quite easy – for Christensen had been given an address by Findlay to which he was to communicate any information concerning his master's movements.

The code to be used had been appointed by Findlay himself. Only every fourth word in each communication was to count, and any jumble of words would do to fill out the rest. So Casement and his servant sat down to concoct their first message within a few days of their arriving in Berlin. They drafted an innocent-looking rigmarole to cover the code that Findlay had prescribed, and the first message when disentangled ran as follows: *'Have got good letter giving names. Sending through Post Office difficult. Give quickly advice. I am broke, send plenty money to Adler.'* In due course the reply came back in Norwegian, also disguised in the same code and to the following effect: *'Letter arrived – I hope that the names and full addresses will be sent to the same place. We pay thirty. If information reliable the money could be paid upon your return (to Norway) or as you wish.'*

The plot was working admirably, and Casement's excitement grew as he discerned possibilities of entrapping the British Minister with the very snare that had been designed for his own downfall. He threw all scruples to the winds, and noted in his diary that he was adopting methods which he loathed, but which he believed to be the only possible means of checkmating the infamous espionage of British diplomacy.

Findlay, he determined, should get all the evidence against him that he could desire. His treason was to be proved to the hilt, and Findlay was to receive through the Norwegian servant such letters as would make his blood run cold. With elaborate ingenuity Casement concocted fake letters that the young Norwegian was to forward to Findlay's agent. 'Our friends here are very well disposed to my project,' he wrote¹³ in the first of these elaborate epistles, after a long preliminary report of his journey from America, 'and from our first exchange of views I am sure they will go the whole road with us. The sanitary pipes will be furnished and on a big scale, with a plenty stock

of disinfectant. Enough for fifty thousand health officers at least. I made that the first condition and they agreed. The difficulty of shipment is, of course, very great, and I fear nothing in that direction is possible until next month. That will be for the best, as meantime the other effort can be well considered and pushed forward to achievement. On both points they agree, and it is only a question of working out details. When project No. 1 is ripe and all arrangements complete, I shall wire by the arranged code from the Scandinavian firm. You must be ready to leave by end of this month or early in December, with the four friends selected already. We shall be fully prepared here by Christmas, and before that I hope to be ready. I shall send full details in ten days or less. Have Michael C. and the Boston man ready. Fifty will be enough. I shall see an important friend to-morrow to discuss further and will add some further news before sending this off by the man to-morrow or next day. The people here are wonderful. If courage should win through – for this people has but one heart and that is at the front. RORY.’

The first part of this faked letter was dated 1st November, and the letter was continued ostensibly on the following day. It reported that he had seen ‘two important friends to-day. All goes splendidly. They will help in every way. No need to give you particulars here as to the shipment. They will make the arrangements themselves. All we have to do is to prepare the reception at the other side. There you and the other friends at home come in. I shall stay on here for the present, but hope to get off from the Schleswig coast or one of the small islands there by a boat my Norwegian can arrange for me. I am glad I brought him, indeed – he has been a treasure – and now I can arrange through him a means of getting across that cannot excite suspicion. The only danger will be from the mines. That bumptious ass Winston began the war, as you remember, by an appeal to Christendom against Germany mining the North Coast – now these sea-dog swankers are mining not the coast-lines only, but the whole sea right up to the Faroe Islands nearly.’

And so on in the same strain. A second faked letter in still more enthusiastic and alarming terms announced that 'all will be ready here by end of December. I have got sixty thousand here and ample stocks for them, and a picked band of trained men to go over'; while it added – for Findlay's greater edification and excitement – that Casement would himself be going to Denmark on the 25th 'to arrange with the shippers.'

Discretion had vanished pitifully as he allowed his hatred to dictate these fantastic memoranda, that were intended to convey to the British Foreign Office so misleading an impression of what had been taking place in Berlin since his arrival. Progress, in fact, was painfully slow, but his perseverance and courage were undaunted. He had started favourably enough at the first interview, but the days passed while the Foreign Office was considering his urgent demand for a declaration of friendly feeling towards Irish Nationalism. Time was slipping by, and he could do nothing but chafe at his enforced inactivity in his hotel, and concoct fresh schemes for the exposure of Findlay's attempt to capture him. There was nothing for it but to wait until the diplomats had decided whether Germany could issue even a vague statement of sympathy with Irish independence, and while the War Office was hatching his plan for getting the Irish prisoners together for him to work among them.

Only the faithful Meyer kept on calling to reassure him, and then came the encouraging news that he was to be taken on a personal visit to the German headquarters in the field. The declaration that he desired so ardently was, he understood, being actually prepared for publication. He left Christensen at the hotel while he went off to visit the military headquarters; but on his return on the 20th, to his annoyance he found his servant still there, though prepared to leave for Norway on the following day, with the two faked letters which had been concocted for Findlay to read and to transmit to London. The delays were maddening, and worse still was the fact that even the promised declaration, which he had been told by von Wedel was to be issued before he left for Charleville, had

not yet appeared. But at last the clouds broke. That afternoon he picked up a copy of the evening newspapers, and there to his joy read, in a large inset panel on the front page, under big headlines, describing his own career as a patriotic Irishman, the text of the proclamation that he had himself inspired.

On the same day in the *Continental News* the full text appeared explaining that Sir Roger Casement, having arrived in Berlin from the United States, had been received at the Foreign Office, and that the Imperial Chancellor had himself authorised the following statement in contradiction of the reports which Sir Roger had communicated to him concerning the attitude of Germany: —

‘The German Government repudiates the evil intentions attributed to it in the statements referred to by Sir Roger Casement, and takes this opportunity to give a categorical assurance that the German Government desires only the welfare of the Irish people, their country, and their institutions. The Imperial Government formally declares that under no circumstances would Germany invade Ireland with a view to its conquest or the overthrow of any native institutions in that country. Should the fortune of this great war, that was not of Germany’s seeking, ever bring in its course German troops to the shores of Ireland, they would land there, not as an army of invaders to pillage and destroy, but as the forces of a Government that is inspired by goodwill towards a country and a people for whom Germany desires only a national prosperity and national freedom.’

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At last he had made things move. The first shot in his campaign had been fired from Berlin, and by the Imperial Chancellor himself. The next step was to hasten the departure of his servant to Norway, and on the 22nd he saw him off safely by the train to the frontier with the two faked letters, and two ‘stolen’ pages from his diary. That night Casement noted exultantly in his own diary: ‘It should make Findlay’s hair, such as remains of it, rise up and bless him and the day he got hold of Adler Christensen.’

He was succeeding beyond question, and already his name

was being plastered over all the German newspapers. The whole situation had lightened, and he had begun to make friends and to renew old acquaintances. They were mostly people whom he had known in connection with his work in Africa; and among those whose presence in Berlin gave him most joy was Count Blücher, upon whose friendship with the leading German diplomats he counted much. His English wife was there with him, and it was a strange meeting between old friends. But adversity overrules many conventions. They were to see much of each other, and Casement's diary records many conversations with Count Blücher and his wife – who was even then writing in serious form the daily record of her own experiences which was to be published after the war as the diary of *An English Wife in Berlin*.

For the present he was still 'Mr. Hammond' of New York, but the hotel people knew his identity already and treated him with marked deference, smiling among themselves at the black beard which was beginning to grow again, and the American flag that he was wearing ostentatiously in his button-hole. Meanwhile there was news, too, of the plan for collecting the Irish prisoners into one place, where he was to begin his campaign among them in real earnest. As soon as he had been to visit them, he would leave the Continental Hotel and go to another, where he would emerge openly to all the world under his own name again.

The days were passing more quickly. News was to hand from day to day of preparations for the formation of an Irish prison camp. A summons to see von Wedel urgently at the Foreign Office reached him, and the news was full of hope. From the German Embassy at the Vatican a report had arrived that two Irish priests had been got, through the rector of the Irish College, Mgr. O'Riordan, who had consented to act as chaplains in the prison camp. Both, he was told, were sound Nationalists. One was named Canice O'Gorman ('a good enough name,' Casement thought) and the other a Dominican, Father Crotty. Much would depend on their attitude, and Casement waited anxiously until news came a few days later

that they had arrived. 'I hope their views may become as mine before we part,' he noted in his diary.

He was disappointed in Father O'Gorman when they did meet a few days later. But Father Crotty, he found, was, 'thank God, a raging Fenian.' So much would turn upon their influence among the prisoners of war. The chaplains would live in constant contact with them day after day, whereas he could only hope to pay occasional propagandist visits to the camp. The question of religious influences had always baffled him, and as an Ulster Protestant, he felt a sudden gulf arise between himself and the Catholic Irish of the south whom he had made it his life's ambition to encourage. It was a disappointment when he found that the two priests could promise nothing, and that their personal politics were to remain unrevealed. 'They are to be entirely non-political,' he noted after seeing them. 'The question is, will they?'

The tension was growing as the time for meeting the Irish prisoners approached, but he still had few misgivings of success. If only the German Government would back him up with real energy he could do so much. He had nothing to complain of about von Wedel, but there was a coldness about von Jagow, the Secretary of State, which discouraged him sorely. He had counted upon meeting him on intimate terms with his friend, Count Blücher; but now Blücher reported once again that the Foreign Secretary had been unable to come to lunch to meet Casement. They had not even met, and he had seen Zimmermann, the Under-Secretary, only on that first visit to the Foreign Office. Casement longed to have another opportunity to unburden his soul to him.

And now Blücher was telling him ominously that, in declining the invitation, von Jagow had 'added things about Ireland and my mission that by Blücher's showing were not very favourable.' What did that mean? Or was it that Blücher had misunderstood the letter from the Under-Secretary? 'He is so extraordinarily inaccurate in his versions of happenings,' Casement commented in his diary. 'He does not intend to misstate, but he does.'

From various prison camps in the west, news came that the Irish prisoners were being rapidly collected into groups, and already the special camp for them at Limburg was being got in readiness. But before Casement started on his mission to them, word came from Christensen in Norway that added enormously to the excitement of his days. The young sailor was a most curious accomplice to have selected for such hazardous schemes, and Heaven alone knew how far he could be depended upon! But Casement had lavished his affection upon the young man, and they had spent day after day concocting plans that would have taxed the ingenuity of a trained diplomatist.

The news which arrived from him now by post, through Meyer and the Foreign Office, gave proof of the risks he had incurred. The two faked letters had got through to Findlay, but the young Norwegian had been held up for two days at the frontier and searched, and the two pages from the alleged diary which were intended for Findlay's edification had got mislaid, as well as some of the written instructions for Christensen himself. It was maddening to think of such stupidity and recklessness. But at least the young man had seen Findlay, and he wrote in triumph to say that the British Minister had given him another five hundred kronen on account. How much of the boy's wild story Findlay had believed, even Casement must have wondered, as he read the letter that reported to him. Adler Christensen had told Findlay of daring schemes for laying mines with a German ship, and about Casement's own alleged preparations for shipping guns from Denmark.

He wrote now imploring his master to send a further faked letter with fuller instructions: '(1) about the German boat laying mines; (2) and about shippers and stuff in Denmark; (3) that you want me to come to Berlin and to give me certain instructions about your and your staff's departure; (4) and casually mention a few names, high sea officers and also well-known land officers, that are going with you on your journey; (5) and some more what you can think of that will be good.' Casement was requested to say, too, that 'everything is ready in America.'

The young sailor had spun a wonderful yarn to Findlay

about 'a whole lot of Americans high up' who were 'going to leave America in a great steam yacht,' and Findlay had asked whether that meant that troops were to be sent from America? Christensen had said that he believed so, and that he was himself to look out for 'some trusty men who would not be afraid to sail out in the North Seas.' Casement, he had said, was willing to pay £6000 or £8000 for a sailing vessel that would stand by till it got orders from him. The jumbled letter had ended with a postscript: 'Dear Sir Roger, Please be quick about this, and this Bastard I will get. I got a good plan, and I will tell you all when I see you. And do it good. I almost forgot to say he said he knew you, and a very clever — And he used a bad word, and that you were very dangerous, and that they must get you. — Your Adler.'

Casement replied at once in a long letter giving his servant all the news. It ended with an affectionate greeting that reveals the pathos of his own loneliness in Berlin. 'I am waiting for good news from America,' his letter concluded, 'and from a dear, true friend in Norway. Write soon to me, dear Adler. I think very often of you, and will be so glad to see you again and clasp your hand. I hope the teeth are all right. If you want money, tell me. — Your true friend, R. C.'

A whole month had passed since Casement's arrival with Meyer in Berlin. Looking back, he could feel that he had accomplished much already. The Government's declaration about Ireland had been published, and he attached enormous importance to its propagandist value. He had developed his plans for leading the British Minister in Christiania into a trap, and his servant was actually in Norway in personal contact with him, spreading all manner of fantastic stories about the gravity of Casement's plans. And now, as the first of December dawned, he was himself preparing for the most arduous, and perhaps the most important, part of all his mission — to go in person to the Irish prisoners' camp which had been brought into existence as a result of his own efforts and representations. He had got chaplains appointed specially for the purpose, and he had equipped himself with a pile of propagandist literature to

distribute among the prisoners. That night his train was to leave Berlin for Frankfurt, and he would be close to Limburg itself on the following day.

All was going well; yet there were aching fears in his heart. Why – the question kept on recurring in his mind – would von Jagow not meet him? He had begun to believe that the German Foreign Secretary was not genuine in his attitude towards the war. It would be a sorry day for Germany, he thought, if men like von Jagow were responsible for the conduct of the war. ‘If the men who have controlled German “diplomacy,”’ he wrote bitterly in his diary, ‘and brought this country to its present state of colossal isolation in the world, had had the war machine to run, I guess the French and Russian armies would now be near Potsdam.’ It was exasperating to be so baffled by inertia.

Yet even now, when he was actually preparing to go down to the Irish prisoners’ camp at Limburg, the most disquieting news of all had reached him through Professor Schiemann. People were spreading rumours about his Norwegian servant, declaring that Casement himself was being fooled by a disreputable sailor. ‘Poor Adler,’ he thought, ‘God knows he is bad enough without these professional inquests on him. I was annoyed beyond words and disgusted.’ Yet the rumours mattered, and enormously. For did not the whole case against Findlay rest upon Adler’s evidence? And was not Adler in charge of the whole conduct of the plan to expose and entrap him?

It was a mercy to have something definite to do; and as his train roared on through the night to Frankfurt, he had much to occupy his mind. His conscience smote him as he thought of Adler. He was haunted by the startling confession that his young sailor servant had made to him on the night before he left for Christiania the week before. It was true that there was much against him. Yet Casement could swear that he had ‘an innate chivalry and sense of honour and courage that made amends.’ But was his own conscience clear – as he thought of the employment for which he was using him, throwing him into

immense temptations as a spy, and trusting him with secrets upon which the lives of many might yet depend?

He wrote him a long letter of exhortation on that day of torment before he left Berlin for Frankfurt, telling him to be very careful in all he did. 'For your own sake, too, I want you to be careful,' he wrote, 'because you are dealing with very powerful people, and I am not a match for them in any way – and if you make any serious mistake, they will drop on you and I could not protect you. I do not want you to get into trouble for me, or to do anything wrong (beyond the wrong we are both doing in meeting deception with deception). I want you to become an honest good man, dear Adler, and to help you to this – and so I am really unhappy when I think of you telling lies for me: and were it not for the reasons you know so well, I should not consent . . . I am always sorry to think of you with that rascal! I want to fight him – not to intrigue against him and tell lies.'

Nevertheless he enclosed another 'fake letter' of his own for Findlay, which met all the points that Adler Christensen had wished him to cover. It talked of the boat standing by in the Baltic; of the major, his staff officer, in the camp where 'the force is being well organised'; and among a heap of lies, there were references to the steam yacht in New York which had 'all the stuff on board.'

The Findlay affair had become so much an obsession that even the Irish prisoners who had been assembling to go to Limburg had begun to seem of comparatively small importance. How would *they* receive his plea to desert their allegiance? Yet, if he should fail with them, what attitude would the Germans adopt towards him for the future? He had begun to have qualms about the eagerness with which his Irish Brigade proposals had been adopted by the German War Foreign Office. He felt he was being pushed into the German service without sufficient guarantees of receiving an adequate political return.

'I will not accept the responsibility,' he wrote in his diary on 6th December, 'for putting a couple of thousand Irish soldiers into the high treason pot, unless I get very precise and sure

promises both in their regard, and for the political future of Ireland.' The Germans were asking for everything; but they would not even make any compensating promise. They would not even listen to his insistence upon the Findlay business. And yet, as he thought it over through the long, lonely hours, his own mind was more and more convinced that 'from the point of view of the Irish cause I am not sure that the case against Findlay is not more telling than would be even the formation of an Irish Brigade. Of course, for the Germans the Irish Brigade is most important. It shames John Bull's Army, and it knocks recruiting on the head in Ireland.'

But why would they not see that the 'Findlay business' must have a still more far-reaching effect on public opinion both in America and in Ireland – that he had actual evidence in his possession to convict John Bull's Government of a 'criminal conspiracy'? His own self-respect must force him to go on with the case against Findlay, and he raged at the thought that Wilhelmstrasse should attempt to obstruct his publication of all the facts. Before that day ended, he wrote at once from Frankfurt to von Wedel to tell him plainly that he would proceed no further with the Irish Brigade until he had seen either the Imperial Chancellor or the Secretary of State.

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The first intimation of Casement's scheme for gathering the Irish prisoners into a single camp, and for an attempt to withdraw them from the British service for enlistment in an Irish Brigade, had reached Berlin in Bernstorff's dispatch from Washington of 25th September, which was intercepted by the British Secret Service. Casement had no notion that his own plans had been known in Whitehall before he had even sailed from America; and his cautious reception by the diplomatic authorities in Berlin had given him no definite assurance that his scheme would even be adopted when he arrived. Nevertheless the idea had been under serious consideration. The huge total of prisoners captured on the Western Front had been augmented enormously by wholesale captures of Russians

in East Prussia after Hindenburg's dramatic victory at Tannenberg; and the possibility of making some use of at least a fraction of the hundreds of thousands of prisoners of war – who had become a serious embarrassment to Germany's threatened food supplies – assumed an importance which was not anticipated at the beginning of the war.

Casement's arrival in Berlin, whatever might be thought of the genuineness or the feasibility of his mission, was at least proof of his own determination to reach Germany. On the face of it, his anti-British propaganda in the United States suggested that he could scarcely be a British spy. On the other hand, the fact that his ship had been searched without his being arrested was certainly suspicious; and the preposterous emphasis which he gave to the attempts of the British Minister in Norway to prevent his going to Germany was far from reassuring. It was not easy to explain why the British Minister had not succeeded in stopping him, when it should have been easy enough to do so, once his false passport had been discovered.

Still more suspicious was the fact that Casement had conducted all his intrigues for frustrating Mr. Findlay through a disreputable young Norwegian sailor whom no serious diplomat of his experience and prestige could be expected to employ for any matter of real importance. That Casement had been allowed to reach Germany, and that the whole story of Mr. Findlay's ineffective efforts to prevent his getting to Germany was a clumsy attempt to hoodwink the German Foreign Office, was probably the first inference that any political department of the Secret Service in other countries would have drawn from the facts presented to them.

But this fantastic scheme for seducing the allegiance of Irishmen serving in the British Army put a completely different complexion upon all his activities. It was inconceivable that any secret service in Europe should employ its own agents for a purpose so utterly in conflict with its own real interests. Had it been a proposal to seduce the loyalty of English soldiers, the plan would have been dismissed immediately as an obvious

deception. But Irish loyalty was a subject with which no English spy could be authorised to tamper. The political department in Berlin had every reason for knowing that English diplomacy would never take the risk of straining Irish loyalty in the present war too far. It had been a wholly unexpected blow to the calculations of the German Government on the eve of war, when Redmond had offered his spontaneous and unqualified support to the British Government. It had played havoc with every hope they had based upon the shrewd observations of von Kuhlmann at the German Embassy in London; and their subsequent information had amply confirmed the reasons upon which von Kuhlmann had framed his own beliefs concerning the situation in Ireland at the time of the gun-running at Howth. There was no doubt that the Irish Volunteers had been, as Casement said, a popular agitation which had forced the parliamentary leaders to assume direction of the new movement in spite of their conservative instincts and convictions. And even before Casement's arrival in Germany there had been news that the Volunteer movement had split asunder over the question of sympathy with Redmond's recruiting campaign; and that nearly all the originators of the movement had joined in expelling Redmond's nominees from the Executive Committee of the Volunteers.

In such conditions who could say what measure of response would be forthcoming to any carefully delivered appeal to the Irish prisoners of war? To ask them to desert their regiments without cause would have been insanity. But to appeal to scattered groups of Irish prisoners of war to reconsider their whole allegiance while they were faced with a prospect of endless months of idle confinement in prison camps, was a proposal that certainly deserved consideration – if only some Irish Nationalist of real prestige were willing to undertake the invidious task of appealing to them in the time of their desolation. Was Casement himself a man whom the prisoners would be likely to regard as an accredited leader? The Germans knew that he had been an almost unknown figure in Irish politics until the very eve of the war. But they were aware of

his remarkable influence behind the scenes in bringing the Volunteer movement to life.

The best guarantee of all was the re-publication in pamphlet form, over his own signature, of the articles he had written in favour of a pro-German neutrality in the event of war. And now, on his own responsibility, he had arrived in Germany at grave personal risk, to offer his own services unconditionally for an effort to carry on the propaganda of the Volunteer movement among the Irish prisoners.

They had taken time to consider the proposal, but whatever success the effort might meet, the German Government would have nothing to lose. It would have much to gain by the chances of success, be they ever so remote. It was the one aspect of Casement's mission that had been received with unqualified approval; and before even he knew that his idea had created enthusiasm in the innermost circles, steps were being taken to test its practical possibilities. By the middle of November orders had already gone forth to the various prison camps that had been established behind the armies of the West, to inquire how many Irishmen were among the prisoners.

The presence of many Irish regiments in the first Expeditionary Force had been well known. Almost anyone in the War Office in Berlin could have given a full list of their names: the 2nd Royal Munster Fusiliers and 2nd Connaught Rangers; the 1st Irish Guards; 2nd Royal Irish Rifles; 1st Royal Irish Fusiliers; 2nd Royal Dublin Fusiliers; 2nd Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers; 5th (Royal Irish) Lancers; 4th (Royal Irish) Dragoon Guards; the North Irish Horse and the South Irish Horse. Every one of these units had taken part in the battles of the retreat from Mons. The Munsters, in their last stand at Etreux, had fought on doggedly hour after hour, shooting with a deadly accuracy of fire that had forced the German commanders to believe that more than a brigade was entrenched there, until the whole strength of a German Army Corps, horse, foot, and artillery, had been called in to overpower them. Half the regiment had been killed or wounded before surrender became inevitable when they were surrounded; and most of the remnant

were now scattered through the prison camps of the Rhineland, wondering whether peace would really come before the end of the year.

The Irish Guards – that new regiment which had never seen active service till it met the German invasion near Villers Cotterets, had only come into existence as a tribute to the bravery of Irish troops in the South African War. That fact in itself gave cause for reflection. They had shown their mettle in that first encounter with prodigies of discipline and valour. ‘I would never have believed that discipline would have enabled one man to do what this commanding officer did,’ wrote a cyclist officer afterwards, describing the battle that he had witnessed when the Irish Guards had been surprised by the road-side, and Colonel Morris had given them the immediate order to fix bayonets. ‘He got the men up from lining one of the sides of the wood – cursed them into heaps for firing high and wasting ammunition, and then got them down to it again: and all in a thick wood where one could only see thirty or forty yards straight – with Germans, from the sound of their firearms and bugles, only one hundred or one hundred and fifty yards away, and an absolute hail of bullets. Gad! it was a fine performance, and they gave the Germans hell!’

Yet it was among such men that Casement now proposed to initiate an anti-British propaganda, appealing to them to desert their own regiments and their dead comrades, and to form a new Irish Brigade to be used in Ireland under Casement’s own directions at the conclusion of the war. What sort of response could this black-bearded adventurer conceivably expect from them? As for hatred of England – what evidence had there been of any enmity between the Irish and English troops in the same divisions? There were too many stories afloat already of individual acts of bravery by Irish soldiers.

There was that story, for instance, of the Dublin Fusilier who had been captured and kept in a house at a little village near Rheims until he could be sent on to a prison camp as soon as the ground was clear. Open warfare was still in progress, and as the Germans lay in ambush in the village, a battalion of the



IRISH PRISONERS OF WAR AT LIMBURG CAMP, WITH THEIR CHAPLAIN,
FATHER GROTTY, O.P., FETCHING PARCELS FROM THEIR FRIENDS IN IRELAND.
DECEMBER 1914

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West Yorkshire Regiment had marched wearily down the narrow street unaware of the danger that lay ahead. And then suddenly a man in khaki had dashed out into the street, to be shot dead from the windows by his guard. He had revealed the secret of the ambush in time to save a whole battalion of Englishmen whom he had never seen before. When they buried him that night and found that every trace of his identity had been removed, they had known only by his uniform that he was a Dublin Fusilier.

Those who had seen something of the prison camps and of the treatment of prisoners, had other reasons for doubting whether men who had so suffered were likely to be in a reconcilable mood. Those first months had witnessed outbursts of brutality which became less frequent as the war dragged on in the later years. Men who had been trained to worship war had become uncontrollable at the end of great fatigues, when they had found themselves in possession of conquered territory. The mere sight of great numbers of prisoners had excited them to frenzy. There had been times when barbarous indignities had been inflicted upon the defenceless by invading troops, intoxicated by their own successes. In the years that followed, many details of these pitiful scenes were to be recorded,¹⁵ and the Irish prisoners had suffered fiercely with the rest.

Such incidents were doubtless inevitable, or at least could only have been prevented by more elaborate organisation than any invading army could be expected to provide for its haul of prisoners. But they had left savage memories. In the prison camps, less than anywhere, was there any feeling of reconciliation towards the Germans, by the time that Casement had begun his preparations for his effort to undermine their loyalty to their own regiments. They were, practically without exception, men of the old army or old reservists; scarcely any of the N.C.O.'s had less than ten years of service with his battalion. The sergeants had, in almost every case, been with their regiments for considerably longer.

How little did Casement realise what sort of men he was preparing to talk to, as he mapped out his campaign of political

propaganda in his hotel in Berlin! Nevertheless he had persuaded the Germans to let him try what he could do. Was it not what that gallant adventurer, Wolfe Tone, had also planned more than a hundred years before – when the star of the young Napoleon was just rising in France's revolutionary wars in Italy? Wolfe Tone, on a mission exactly analogous to Casement's, had attempted to organise aid from France for an armed insurrection in Ireland, and he, too, had sought permission to seduce the allegiance of Irishmen in the British service. But Tone had been a gay soldier of fortune at all times; and his own plans for seducing the allegiance of Irish Catholics serving in the British Fleet had been planned for very different circumstances. The pressgangs had forced many young Irishmen into the Fleet in those days; and Tone's appeal to them would have meant freedom and escape from a service that they had never voluntarily entered. Moreover, it was no question for him of going among war-weary, desperate men in a prison camp, but of seeking out the sailors who were on shore in a French port. Tone's hot-blooded temperament had suggested a very different method of approach. He had not thought of distributing newspapers and political tracts among forlorn prisoners, but of going down to the taverns by the dock and joining in the hilarity of seamen just come on shore. He had counted¹⁶ quite shamelessly upon the influence of strong French wine, and the blandishments of French girls, to win over the young Irish sailors to an adventure that filled his own heart with joy.

Casement's propaganda was to be a much more earnest matter. He had been accumulating copies of the *Gaelic American* and piles of little pamphlets and tracts written by himself, which the prisoners were to read during their interminable hours of leisure, after he had come among them for a first short visit and departed again. He had not the faintest conception of how intimate was the affection they felt towards their own regiments. Still less had he any conception of what treatment they had been receiving in their prison camps, or of what they had suffered on their way back from the battlefields. He would have

denounced with furious indignation, as the diabolical propaganda of the British Government, any suggestion that they had been treated with less than kindness. And even if he had found them sleeping in the open without coverings – huddled together like the native women whose plight had so stirred his anger when he had seen the filthy prison huts on the Congo – he would have deplored the necessities of war, and returned immediately to Berlin to use his influence to secure them better treatment.

It was a consolation to him already to know that the Irish prisoners were being got together¹⁷ in the various camps, and that preparations for their comfortable housing at Limburg were being rapidly completed. He could feel sure even now that the Irishmen in so many camps must be aware that somewhere in their exile they had found a friend.

At Munster about a score of Irishmen had been sorted out; at Döberitz several hundred; at Hanover about one hundred and fifty had been got together, and a German general who spoke English had addressed them in a short speech, 'telling them how badly the English had behaved.' He had informed them of the extraordinary news that all the Irish prisoners in Germany were to be segregated and assembled in one camp, where they would receive special favourable treatment because they were Irishmen. The news had spread through the camp at Hanover like wildfire, and after the general's appeal for Irishmen to send in their names, such an immense response had been forthcoming that a closer scrutiny had to be made. It was found that nearly half of the so-called Irishmen had no connection whatever with Ireland!

But it was at the huge prison camp at Sennelager, where some twenty thousand French and nearly ten thousand British soldiers had been assembled, that the number of Irishmen was greatest. Nearly fifteen hundred of them were found there, including some hundreds from the artillery or medical or other corps, besides large batches from the Irish regiments. They could have no doubt that some big scheme was on foot, when they found so many Irishmen separated into a special com-

and snow was falling thick, with a merciless east wind, on the morning of 1st December, when the first batch of Irish prisoners to arrive there was ordered out of the barracks at nine in the morning to fetch their breakfast of black coffee with a chunk of black bread. The new wooden huts where they were lodged were air-tight enough; and as the men had nothing to do but lie on their backs indoors all day, the atmosphere inside was stuffy, but at least warm.

There was little enough inducement to venture out in the snow, for nearly all the prisoners had lost their overcoats and their puttees, either before or after their capture; and for boots, most of them had had to be provided with heavy wooden clogs. So most of them emerged on their first morning in the camp, each with his blanket wrapped round him and over his head, like old women with shawls on the roads in the west of Ireland.

It was a diversion to see who their new companions were to be, and there was great excitement and jubilation at the discovery that every man in the camp belonged to an Irish regiment. Not four months had yet elapsed since their first landing in France, and some of them had been prisoners only for a few weeks, before this astonishingly attractive plan had been put forward of assembling all the prisoners from Irish regiments in one central camp. Only a few hundred were there on the first days, but their number grew rapidly, and before long there were hundreds of Irish prisoners, delighted to have discovered themselves among old friends, or at least fellow-countrymen with common memories.

Whatever purpose the Germans might have in bringing so many Irishmen together to receive favourable treatment in their own special prison camp, there was an *esprit de corps* among the Irish regiments which no amount of flattery or favourable treatment was likely to undermine. The main contingent from Sennelager, where the Irishmen had been assembled in their own compound for some weeks, had not yet arrived. As yet no one had heard of the sensational announcements that had been made at Sennelager, or of the gallant

refusal with which the Irishmen there had met the promise of special treatment.

After some days, when the number of prisoners in the camp had increased considerably, the first indication of impending trouble came to light. 'It was a beautifully clear, cold day,' wrote one of Casement's lieutenants five years afterwards,* 'the winter sun shining brilliantly down on the snow-covered roofs of the houses in Limburg, and lighting up the spire of the Sankt Elisabeth Kirche, into a burnished coppery ray. The rich voice of the German corporal had summoned the general parade outside the prisoners' huts, and N.C.O.'s and men of the various Irish regiments came tumbling out to form upon the ground outside.' And then came the startling announcement that all sergeants and corporals were to march over to an empty hut, where a distinguished Irish gentleman would soon arrive to address them.

Who the distinguished Irishman might be, they could not imagine. Their bewilderment was no less when, after waiting for nearly an hour, two German officers, one of them being Marshal von Biberstein, walked into the hut, accompanied by an extremely tall, pale-faced man with a black beard, and the appearance of a mediæval adventurer, whose name, they were told, was Sir Roger Casement. He showed signs of nervousness, and was evidently a very unpractised public speaker; but he spoke with obvious earnestness as he greeted them as fellow-Irishmen and appealed to them to remember that they owed a duty to Ireland which came before any other allegiance. They were there, he knew, as soldiers in the British Army, but they belonged to Irish regiments recruited in Ireland. He asked them to reconsider their whole position in regard to the war, and he put before them a different version of the war's origins, urging that Germany had in reality been forced to wage war in self-defence against Russia and France and England.

He did not speak for many minutes, but turned to the German orderly who had arrived carrying bundles of newspapers, the *Gaelic American* and the *Continental Times*. These he

* In *Land and Water*, November 1919.

distributed quietly among the N.C.O.'s, who were still utterly puzzled as to his identity. He could see at once that his appeal had made little impression, and that his intrusion was plainly resented. But before he left he asked whether anyone present would volunteer to take a note-book and enter in it the names of any Irish prisoners who would be willing to enrol in a special Irish Brigade to be formed under German officers to serve in Ireland.

It had been an anxious task to face, and he had spent days in thinking out the exact form his first appeal should take. He stayed barely half an hour on this first visit. He had scarcely hoped for any immediate or dramatic response to his appeal; but this mission had at least been redeemed from complete failure. One very young corporal, named Quinlisk, of the Royal Irish Regiment, stepped forward almost immediately and volunteered to undertake the enrolment of members. A sergeant also had followed, but changed his mind. In any case this preliminary visit had been purposely arranged to take place before the main group of Irish prisoners – they would be enough almost to fill two battalions altogether – were due to reach Limburg from Sennelager Camp.

As Casement drove away down the snow-covered slopes of the hillside, he knew that before he came again the newspapers and pamphlets would at least have been read and fully discussed day after day, in the long monotonous hours of idleness.

And before he departed, the prison camp orderlies were already nailing up over the walls of the huts printed copies of the following proclamation, which were to remain there as a daily incitement to enrol so long as the camp was used for the Irish prisoners: –

IRISHMEN!

Here is a chance for you to fight for Ireland!

You have fought for England, your country's hereditary enemy.

You have fought for Belgium, in England's interest, though it was no more to you than the Fiji Islands!

Are you willing to fight for your own country?

With a view to securing the National Freedom of Ireland, with the moral and material assistance of the German Government, an Irish Brigade is being formed.

The object of the Irish Brigade shall be to fight solely the cause of Ireland, and under no circumstances shall it be directed to any German end.

The Irish Brigade shall be formed and shall fight under the Irish flag alone; the men shall wear a special, distinctively Irish uniform and have Irish officers.

The Irish Brigade shall be clothed, fed, and efficiently equipped with arms and ammunition by the German Government. It will be stationed near Berlin, and be treated as guests of the German Government.

At the end of the war the German Government undertakes to send each member of the Brigade, who may desire it, to the United States of America, with necessary means to land. The Irishmen in America are collecting money for the Brigade. Those men who do not join the Irish Brigade will be removed from Limburg and distributed among other camps.

If interested, see your company commanders.

Join the Irish Brigade and win Ireland's independence!

Remember Bachelor's Walk!

GOD SAVE IRELAND!

*

At least a beginning had been made at Limburg. There was no use hurrying matters before the main contingent of Irish prisoners arrived there from Sennelager.

Casement went back to Berlin where he made repeated efforts to get in touch with Count Blücher. When he succeeded in catching him, he found him increasingly difficult to deal with, and quite indifferent in regard to prosecuting the case against Findlay. He did at least introduce Casement to the

Minister for the Colonies, Dr. Solf; but what a mockery it was that anyone should even continue to hold that portfolio when every German colony had been seized since the outbreak of war! Blücher wished Casement to meet Erzberger, the leader of the Catholic Centre Party in the Reichstag; but Casement refused to discuss the Irish Brigade until he was authorised, and the matter had gone no further. The interview was cancelled with some ill feeling on both sides. Relations between the two old friends were becoming strained; but Casement realised that it would be fatal to break with Blücher. He at least provided a channel through which he could appreciate the working of von Jagow's mind.

Within a few days of Casement's return from Limburg, Blücher suddenly made a revelation that explained much. The Secretary of State had sent for him, and they had talked over Casement and his plans, and von Jagow had said quite flatly that the German Government 'were not going to make themselves ridiculous by saying things they had no intention of carrying out or attempting.' For weeks Casement had guessed that this was their attitude; and as he thought over the matter, an article in *The Times* which he read on the same day, announcing the suggestion of peace proposals in New York through Dernburg, confirmed his suspicions, for it made no mention of Ireland among the small nations that were to be guaranteed their right to national independence if they supported Germany.

The whole attitude of the German Foreign Office had begun to rankle in his mind. He told Blücher, as they lunched together next day, that if neither Bethmann Hollweg nor von Jagow would agree to see him, he would decide to leave Germany. It was true that he had been given a special passport in the Kaiser's own name, which granted him diplomatic privileges. But the passport was only to be valid for three months, during which time it might be presumed that they counted upon his demonstrating whether his plans for the Irish Brigade would succeed. That night as he wrote in his diary, the sadness that had been growing upon him overflowed.

'In my heart I am very sorry I came,' he wrote frankly – and

he had as yet paid only a first flying visit to the prisoners' camp, before even the bulk of the prisoners had been brought together. 'I do not think that the German Government has any soul for great enterprises – it lacks the divine spark that has ennobled British piracy. The seas may be freed by these people – but I doubt it. They will do it in their sleep – and without intending to achieve anything so great.'

He had grown bitterly disillusioned when his work had scarcely begun. He could no longer disguise from himself that he was being simply exploited by the German Government, from which he expected a 'fixed unchanging policy' that would regard the freedom of Ireland as the pivot of world freedom for the seas. It was true that he had made some headway. But he could see with dismay that he was already provoking counter measures that might never have been taken if he had not intervened.

On 13th December there came news that showed how closely his movements had been observed and how swiftly measures had been taken to counteract them. He had been rejoicing at his own success in getting the appointment, through the German Embassy at the Vatican, of the two chaplains for the Irish prisoners. But who could have foreseen the astonishing counter-stroke that had followed? Here before him was authoritative confirmation of the news that the British Foreign Office had actually appointed a Minister to the Holy See! The Pope had accepted the offer – doubtless with enthusiasm. Casement could never have believed that it would happen; and it was not altogether consoling to feel that his own efforts had been the immediate cause of so revolutionary a decision.

'I have actually forced them,' he wrote, 'to a step hateful to "every good Englishman"' and to reverse the Reformation! It is an unprecedented step, and if the German Government had brains they would see how deep they had already struck.'

But had they brains? Would he ever succeed in persuading them that Ireland was – as he had himself stated so clearly, even on the cover of his pamphlet – the 'Achilles heel of England.' At any rate he found, when Blücher took him to meet

Solf, the German Colonial Minister, that his pamphlet had been read and that at least that phrase had not been overlooked. Dr. Solf was not only polite, but obviously impressed. He assured Casement that the German declaration about Ireland was 'an entirely new departure in German foreign policy; and that it had expressed for the first time any intention on Germany's part to concern itself with the internal affairs of another country.'

'We parted the very best of friends,' Casement wrote that evening; and he had gone on and 'dined with poor old Blücher at the Esplanade till 10.30.' Solf had even promised to arrange a meeting for him with von Jagow. Was all this waiting on the door-step to end at last?

*

Adler Christensen had meanwhile been busy in Christiania, filling the ears of an incredulous British Minister with lurid tales of rifle-cargoes to be smuggled from the Baltic, and of colossal American steam yachts that were to bring reinforcements to Ireland from the United States. Findlay would have received Casement's own concocted letters that were intended to create panic in Whitehall. But in Whitehall, unknown to Casement, a secret letter¹⁴ of his own to Eoin McNeill, the organiser of the Irish Volunteers, had already been intercepted and duly studied. It had been sent through the good offices of some of Casement's aristocratic friends in Berlin, under cover of a packet for Holland, and it had been further concealed by being enclosed in a covering letter to Mrs. J. R. Green in London, by whom the following cryptic and unsigned note was easily understood: -

'Send this on by hand. Read it if you like; it is a sacred confidence. But send it on by sure means. With much love and affection from the Man of Three Cows. He is well, and has convincing assurance of help, recognition, friends, and comfort for the poor old woman. All that he asks for will be given her and the stranger put out of her house for ever. He has seen big men, and they were one with his views, and if successful they will aid to uttermost to redeem the four green fields.' Enclosed in that allegorical epistle was the second

envelope, addressed to Professor McNeill in Dublin, and bearing the instruction: 'Not to go through post on any account.' It was dated Berlin, 28th November 1914, and ran as follows: —

'Please have this official declaration of the German Government, stating its intentions and declaring the goodwill of the German people towards Ireland and the desire of both Government and people for Irish national freedom published throughout Ireland by every possible means.

'You know who writes this. I am in Berlin, and if Ireland will do her duty, rest assured Germany will do hers towards us, our cause, and our whole future.

'The enemy are doing everything to keep the truth out of Ireland, and are even going to try to get the Vatican on their side, as in the time of Parnell. Once our people, clergy, and volunteers know that Germany, if victorious, will do her best to aid us in our efforts to achieve an independent Ireland, every man at home must stand for Germany and Irish freedom.

'I am entirely assured of the goodwill of this Government towards our country, and beg you to proclaim it far and wide. They will do all in their power to help us to win national freedom, and it lies with Ireland and Irishmen themselves to prove that they are worthy to be free.

'Send to me here in Berlin, by way of Christiania, if possible, one or two thoroughly patriotic Irish priests — young men best. Men like Father Murphy* of Vinegar Hill — *and for the same purpose.*

'Rifles and ammunition can be found and good officers, too. First send the priest or priests, as I need them for a special purpose here, you can guess — for —

'If the priest or priests can get to Christiania (Norway), they can get here through the German Legation at Christiania. Our friends in America will pay all expenses. Warn all our people, too, of the present intrigue at Rome to bring pressure of religion to bear on a question wholly political and national. Our enemy will stick at no crime to-day against Ireland, as you will soon know. This official declaration of the German

* A priest who took a prominent part in the Irish Rebellion of 1798.

Government has been sent out to all the German representatives abroad for world-wide publication. It may be followed by another still more to the point – but much depends on your staunchness and courage at home.

‘Tell all to trust the Germans – and to trust me. We shall win everything if you are brave and faithful to the old cause. Try and send me word here to Berlin by the same channel as this. Tell me all your needs at home, viz., rifles, officers, men. Send priest or priests at all costs – one not afraid to *fight* and die for Ireland. The enemy are hiding the truth. The Germans will surely, under God, defeat both Russia and France, and compel a peace that will leave Germany stronger than before. They already have five hundred and fifty thousand prisoners of war in Germany, and Austria one hundred and fifty thousand, and Russia has been severely defeated in Poland.

‘India and Egypt will probably both be in arms. Even if Germany cannot reach England to-day, we can only gain by helping Germany now, as with the understanding come to, Ireland will have a strong and enlightened friend to help to ultimate independence.

‘We may win everything by this war if we are true to Germany; and if we do not win to-day we insure international recognition of Irish nationality and hand on an uplifted cause for our sons.

‘Reply by this route: A letter for me, addressed to Mr. Hammond, 76 Wilhelmstrasse, Berlin, to be enclosed in one addressed to Messrs. Wambersin and Son, Rotterdam.’

From Washington also Whitehall had been able to intercept and decipher further cables¹⁴ from the German Ambassador concerning Casement. One of them, dated 5th December, was to the following effect: –

‘For Casement:

‘Confidential agent arrived in Ireland at end of November.

‘The declaration of the German Foreign Office has made an excellent impression.

‘The priest starts as soon as the leave of absence which he requires has been granted. This is expected soon.

'Judge Cohalan recommends not publishing statement about attempt on Casement's life until actual proofs are secured.

'Requests for money have been complied with.

'There have been purchased for India eleven thousand rifles, four million cartridges, two hundred and fifty Mauser pistols, five hundred revolvers with ammunition. Devoy does not think it possible to ship them to Ireland.

'I am trying to buy rifles for Turkey in South America.'

And a week later, another cable from the same source had been intercepted and filed in the Intelligence Departments in Whitehall: -

'Please remit a thousand dollars to Sir Roger Casement, which have been paid to me by Mr. Devoy, of the *Gaelic American*.

'For Casement:

'O'Donnel cannot go.

'Reverend John T. Nicholson, of Philadelphia, is on sick leave now, and ready to start.

'First available vessel sails for Netherlands 18th December. Arranged to have pass for Italy and Switzerland.

'Is in every way qualified. Speaks Irish well. Has visited Germany and is in full sympathy with the work we want done. Born in Ireland, but is American citizen.'

So, before that message could be transmitted from the German Foreign Office to Casement, the British Secret Service was already aware of the identity of the Irish-born, naturalised American citizen, Father Nicholson, who was to give him the active assistance, as a priest on sick leave, which the two officially appointed chaplains to the prison camp at Limburg were precluded from giving, even if they had desired to do so. It would be after Christmas before Father Nicholson could be ready to embark upon the campaign, and Casement's natural shyness made him the more ready to postpone his second visit until the Irish American priest could come to give him moral support. The Sennelager prisoners were not due to reach Limburg until 17th December, and Casement had heard with deep misgivings of their heroic request that any mitigation of

the ordinary prisoners' treatment should be withdrawn from them. It was less likely than ever that he would meet with any real success in Limburg once they arrived; and the reports that he received from young Quinlisk at Limburg, who had volunteered to enrol recruits for the Irish Brigade, were far from encouraging.

An eye-witness who joined Casement's Brigade and wrote his recollections afterwards in *Land and Water* remarks mournfully that 'unfortunately for Q. the English in camp worked hard to keep the Irish loyal, and succeeded only too well. More of the men would certainly have joined in December had the propaganda been pursued more intelligently. The German interpreters and officers were not at any time really sensible of the great importance of the work, and had not the faintest idea why an Irish Brigade should be formed. In fact, many Germans expressed open disapproval of the idea of seducing British soldiers from their duty to king and country.' And he adds from his personal experience, that 'as soon as it became known in camp, where there were now about five thousand men, that I was an Irish Brigade man and a pro-German, my life became a hell upon earth. Taunts and jibes were flung at me by every low scoundrel in camp, and I had the greatest difficulty sometimes in getting any ration of food.' The only friend he could find, he says pathetically, was the Irish-American Father Nicholson. But that was after the Sennelager prisoners had arrived. Among them Casement had discovered an ally before they left Sennelager, who was also to write of his experiences in a hysterical narrative in the *Catholic Bulletin* some twelve years afterwards. Mr. McKeogh therein gives his own description of their arrival.

'The rumbling transport train at last reached the Catholic pro-cathedral town of Limburg a/Lahn, snugly slumbering in the lower reaches of the valley, and sentinelled by the spire of St. Killian's Cathedral, with its three hundred feet of graceful masonry, towering heavenwards. The light of daybreak, 19th December 1914, tinged this ancient landmark of Christianity when I first beheld it. Surely the fruitful seed of Irish Catholic

missionary labours had taken firm root in the Lahn valley. Fifteen hundred Irish soldiers marched that morning over the cobble-paved streets of this old-fashioned south German town, and the bracing mid-winter atmosphere seemed to quicken their sprightly march towards the camp situated about a mile away. The next location of the Irishmen stood on the hill south of Limburg, the slopes of which had seen many a bloody fray.

‘What a change awaited us in this new camp at Limburg! Fine wooden huts, each with two rooms, to house fifty men, well ventilated and comfortable in every respect; beds on wooden trestles, with sufficient blankets. On that wintry morning, after an eighteen hours’ tedious train journey, I for one slept the sleep of the just, disturbed only by the one thought: What would the morning *réveillé* bring in the way of camp news? On examination, I found that some three hundred other Irish soldiers had already been mustered from different camps throughout Germany, and had been there for two weeks. Having scouted around the different lines, I came across a lot of familiar faces: principally from Doeberitz b/Berlin and Neustadt a/Ashe. The entire conversation centred on the recent visit of an individual named Casement from Ireland, in connection with the Irish Volunteers at home. A few branded this mystery man “A Boer,” others “some b — Fenian.”’

McKeogh, recalling a former passing acquaintance with Casement in America in 1911, had got in correspondence with him through an intermediary before he had left Sennelager, and he claimed that he had done useful work in helping the Germans to weed out English applicants for a transfer to the Irishmen’s camp while the preparations were being made. He soon received a personal letter from Casement after his arrival, which told him frankly that he saw what ‘a bad lot indeed’ the prisoners were, but advised him as to the best hope of gaining recruits. ‘Young men with a fair education, those most likely to know the history of their own country, will make the best candidates,’ he wrote. But there was also the disconcerting proviso, which revealed the difficulties of Casement’s scrupulous temperament, that ‘on no account can married soldiers be

enrolled, as their acceptance would involve, in course of time, their dependants' allowances being stopped by the Downing Street gang.' Meanwhile, he was to keep a watchful eye upon the civilian interpreter who had lately been transferred from the civilians' internment camp at Ruhleben.

Casement had met McKeogh in New York during the agitation over the Putumayo, and he wrote freely about their mutual friends in America. He told him that Father Nicholson was already on his way to Europe. 'McGarrity's choice,' he explained, had been 'stopped by the British authorities.' The German professor who brought McKeogh Casement's letter, would 'see in the meantime that any proposals made by you are carried out as far as the camp officials are concerned. I intend going into the exact position when the opportunity arises in a few days.' 'On the whole' he wrote, 'the situation is yet in its infancy.'

But McKeogh found his task extremely difficult. 'The Irish regiments of the British Army gave a perverted support to everything anti-Irish,' he writes. 'One day Don Q. sought me out in the camp and, without my asking, told me much respecting a "Leinster" sergeant and his associates and their dealings with Roger. Sean Kavanagh, South Irish Horse, afterwards sergeant in the Irish Brigade, had already put me right in this matter. Who my earlier informant was did not reach Quinlisk's ears, however. This was also the chief difficulty with the "wise ones" and senior N.C.O.'s amongst the old and new arrivals. They would not be made confidants. A great deal of apathy prevailed in regard to Roger's mission, and the forming of an Irish Brigade from the ranks. Secret cliques sprang up in every hut. The guiding lights were the N.C.O.'s, sergeant-majors, sergeants, and corporals. Their spokesmen and touts could be seen all over the camp: here and there, a group gathered together, listening attentively to defensive tactics being proposed. In most part, those zealots were so-called Irishmen with pronounced English, Scottish, or Welsh dialects. Once in a while an outburst of loyalty would grip the hearers, and one heard, "Good old Jock," "Stick it, Taffy," "Up, Blighty," while

again a South Munster accent would be re-echoed with shouts of "Go on, de Munsters," "Up, Cork, and de Molly Maguires."'

McKeogh made it his first concern to weed out all Englishmen or others who had contrived to reach Limburg, with the smaller contingents, under false pretences. But even then, he 'soon clearly saw that to succeed I must get down to business in reality. Professor S. was prepared to meet all feasible plans, but, as events turned out, he was not the deciding factor. The camp officials were all old reserve officers, and preferred a quiet life. Isolated solitude was more in their line of soldiering. I promised them a hot time, and kept that promise. It was arranged that I should take charge of the camp medical room. In this way I acted in the capacity of N.C.O. i/c. of the sick, the lame, and the lazy. Camp medical reports were in my hands every morning, consequently my duty took me into every room, or N.C.O.'s bunk, throughout the compound. The next thing I sought was the Nominal Roll and the history sheets of every individual in this little cosmopolitan town, encircled by barbed wire and the ever-visible electrified death-wire dividing the outer and inner entanglements. After a time, however, Professor S. seemed to give up the effort. Casement's endeavours with such a mob he termed "an Irish nightmare." But I was determined to "lay the ghost." Now, it seems to me, too, like a passing brain fever. I was in the midst of enemies. There were, however, many friends, but few I cared to trust. Those best inclined were wavering, presumably unwilling to jeopardise their actual status as prisoners of war.'

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Casement realised the hopelessness of attempting any further propaganda among the prisoners, until he could go down to Limburg with the American Father Nicholson as an escort. He had more than enough to occupy his mind, with his personal vendetta against Mr. Findlay in Christiania. There, Adler Christensen's audacious activities were producing dramatic results, and even opening up possibilities of a vastly more ambitious counter-attack than Casement had contemplated. He had telegraphed to Christensen to return, and while he

waited, he read further news of the repercussions of his own activities. The King, he read, had given an interview to Sir H. Howard, the new Envoy Extraordinary to the Holy See – ‘and the latter takes with him my friend J. D. Gregory as his secretary! Ghosts of the Putumayo Indians! How strange it all is! Gregory, who collaborated with me in the Foreign Office, to get the Franciscan Mission sent out by the Vatican, and who was first in belauding me at Rome and in London, now goes to Rome to aid in belabouring me and in enslaving Ireland! English rule is assuredly the masterpiece of dissimulation of the world. I await with amusement the forthcoming comments of the English world on my “treason” – but oh! God save Ireland!’

The next day, young Christensen returned from Norway, and his account of his dealings with Findlay was lurid. All scruples about deceitful conduct had vanished long ago, and now Casement writes jubilantly in his diary that ‘Adler spun a delightful web of lies!’ How much of it all did he really think that the British Minister had believed? And was it possible that Casement himself believed Christensen when he talked of Findlay’s terror – ‘pale, with beads of perspiration rolling off him, and walking up and down the room in a state of wild excitement.’ Yet there was no exaggeration of detail that he would not eagerly devour – until the dissolute young Norwegian must have wondered whether it taxed his imagination more to tell deliberate lies for the British Minister, in order to increase his reward as a spy, or to report upon his interviews with sufficient vehemence to satisfy his employer.

Findlay ‘called him a very nasty name,’ Casement writes solemnly in his diary for 16th December, ‘and said I was very “clever and a very dangerous son of a b — !” He promised Adler £10,000 for my capture! I am mounting up in value! He said it would be more than that – but that sure.’ The young Norwegian had talked magnificently to Findlay about two great bankers, one in Norway and one in the United States of America, who he alleged were backing Casement; and Mr. Findlay had asked whether Mr. Armour (the tinned-meat king of Chicago) was the owner of the yacht that Casement had

obtained. 'So they think Armour is a Fenian, too! It is quite delicious,' Casement recorded. 'He says that if I go to Norway, Findlay will "go bughouse" (an American euphemism, I believe, for "going off his chump"). I may have to go to Norway before long – in any case. We shall see.'

But it was disconcerting how little enthusiasm he could arouse among his friends for this tremendous game of exposing Mr. Findlay at Christiania. Even Kuno Meyer, who had collaborated with him in the preparation of his propagandist pamphlet, *The Crime Against Europe*, was writing urgently from America to advise against any publication of the Findlay story – on the paltry ground that Mr. James . . . , whose passport Casement had borrowed, might get into trouble. And even the Ambassador Bernstorff was counselling delay unless Casement could produce absolute 'proof.' Would they never see the real importance of exposing John Bull in all his nakedness as the author of a 'criminal conspiracy' against Casement's life?

Casement vowed that he would force them all to heed his arguments. Young Christensen had brought back a scheme that was staggering in its audacity, and Casement's hatred burned more fiercely than ever as he thought of it. It was nothing less than a deliberate trap which would not only fool Findlay, but would scupper the British warships that would come out to waylay Casement in his attempt to reach the American yacht from Schleswig. His admiration for the young Norwegian had grown beyond all bounds. Adler described in detail his two interviews with Mr. Findlay; and how after the second interview Findlay not only told him to come at any hour he wished to the Legation, but even gave him the key of its back entrance. The key he now had in his pocket, and produced as evidence, which Casement never questioned. Findlay, he was told, had actually paid over five hundred kronen for the sole purpose of paying the travelling and hotel expenses of a copyist, who was to accompany the Norwegian servant back to Berlin, to copy any plans that he could steal, and to carry them back to Christiania under Christensen's orders.

Casement would have a good story to pass on to the German

Foreign Office. If only they could be relied upon to act up to their immense opportunities! Two days after Christensen's return there came the most hopeful and reassuring message which had reached him since his first arrival in Berlin. When he returned to his hotel that evening a letter was waiting for him, actually requesting that he should call at midday of the following day upon the Imperial Chancellor himself. From Richard Meyer, too, there was great news on the same evening – that Father Nicholson was starting on that very day from America to land in Naples, on his way to assist Casement at Limburg in recruiting the Irish Brigade. At last everything seemed to be moving; but his spirits sank as he thought of the appalling formality of German interviews and of the improbability that Bethmann Hollweg would really adopt his plans.

He knew well by this time the exterior of that fine palace next door to the Foreign Office which was the Imperial Chancellor's official residence. Before his interview he went early by appointment to call upon von Wedel – whom he found this time more friendly than ever, and who even told him at once that the Government had agreed to all his conditions concerning the Irish Brigade. And then, passing out from the Foreign Office with the 'head of the British section' as his escort, he went in next door, to be ushered immediately into the large room where Bethmann Hollweg in his grey uniform was standing to receive him. 'He advanced to meet me, shook me warmly by the hand and led me to a chair,' Casement noted in his diary that evening. 'He spoke in French, I in English, by agreement. I did most of the talking and discussed Ireland, the Irish in America, and my hopes or "dreams" of a free Ireland, either now or later – but some day.

'He agreed that an independent Ireland, if possible of achievement, would be a good thing for Germany and for the freedom of the seas, and a desirable thing to attempt. I said I was aware, fully aware, that to-day, with the British Fleet barring the way and keeping all Ireland in jail, to think of an independent Ireland was "fantastic," and he agreed to that. But I begged him to have an Irish policy for Germany in the

future; for the next war would be a war for the seas, and then the cause of Ireland would indeed be the cause of Germany. He agreed. I spoke also of the Irish Brigade, and of my hope that by its formation "at least a hard blow could be struck at recruiting in Ireland," to which the Chancellor assented, and said that it would be of great service.'

And then, at the Chancellor's own request, Casement had unburdened his soul about the Findlay story. He told of Findlay's offer of £10,000 to Christensen for handing him over anywhere in the North Sea or Skager-Rack; and he told him of Findlay's amazing action in entrusting the key of the back door of the Legation to Casement's servant. That statement, as Casement hoped, struck home. It made more impression upon the Chancellor than anything else. The Chancellor protested that it was utterly incredible; and Casement had laughed triumphantly, saying how much better he knew the English character than any German did. 'Individually the Englishman is a gentleman, often and frequently very charming,' he told Bethmann Hollweg, 'but collectively they are a most dangerous compound, and form a national type that has no parallel in humanity.' Bethmann Hollweg laughed pleasantly, and agreed that Casement's diagnosis of the British character was no doubt correct, and as he shook him warmly by the hand in saying good-bye, he wished him 'all success in your aims and projects.'

Casement went back to the Foreign Office with von Wedel, and there they had another long talk over Ireland, and the great news of the past few weeks – the German cruisers' success in bombarding Scarborough without even encountering the British Fleet, and other signs of German victory. Von Wedel had been 'more friendly than ever,' and had impressed upon Casement that the Chancellor's interview was intended as proof of the German sympathy with all his aims. For himself, he could only say that whatever the outcome of the war and fate of Ireland might be, they would pursue a policy of goodwill to Ireland commercially, if they could not achieve a positive act of political assistance. And then Casement had unfolded

Adler Christensen's tremendous plan of attempting to use Casement as a bait for the British Fleet, so that the Germans could arrange to intercept and destroy whatever ships were sent to capture him. Von Wedel listened with close attention, and he promised to go at once to the Admiralty to discuss possibilities with them.

That evening, while he was waiting for dinner at his hotel, a thrilling telephone message came through to Casement from von Wedel to say that the Admiralty were already taking the plan into consideration and were likely to adopt it. His friend advised him to keep Christensen in Berlin until further orders; and Casement there and then cancelled the arrangement which had been made for his servant to go back at once to Christiania, with more bogus letters for Mr. Findlay, 'and some further invented atrocities of mine against England, to keep poor Mr. Findlay at a white heat of criminal invention against myself until such time as I might arrange for my own going to Norway to get him caught in *flagrante delicto*.' 'Now the project is a twofold one,' he wrote in his excitement, 'to catch Findlay and catch some vessels of the British Navy at the same time.'

The plan was delightfully simple. 'Findlay's hope is that I shall embark off the coast of Schleswig in a sailing-boat to join the phantom American yacht (Armour's or someone else's) at an assigned locality in the North Sea. Adler is to get a copy of my plans and learn the exact spot, and let Findlay know the time to have British vessels there to waylay me. The scheme is simple. The answer is to arrange a spot with the German Admiralty, when they too shall be there – and instead of British cruisers catching me, they catch a submarine Tartar – a Diodon, in fact.'

Yet his conscience smote him as he thought of the trap he was laying for innocent men. 'How far it may go, I can't say,' he wrote in his diary. 'Personally, I don't like it. It is too British.'

He had grown so blinded by hatred of England and by his personal loathing of Findlay, who had come to personify

English policy in his own mind, that he was strangely unaware of either his own glaring inconsistency or of how incredible his own plans must appear to the German authorities. He who was constantly reporting to the German Foreign Office the success of his own efforts to fill Findlay's mind with lies, was in the same breath for ever denouncing English deceitfulness or hypocrisy. Boasting of his own successful falsehood to Findlay, he was expecting them to believe everything that he told them. And what an incredible story it was that he wished them to believe! What possible evidence had he that the key which his Norwegian sailor boy had brought back in triumph from Christiania was really the key of the back door of the British Legation?

By his own account he knew little enough of Adler Christensen. It was not surprising that the Germans began to make inquiries concerning him; and what they learned was far from encouraging. Any normal person would have seen at a glance that the young man was a disreputable adventurer; he was idiotically overdressed, and he had even begun to make up his complexion, once the idea of his own importance had become so inflated. The police had already accumulated evidence of his activities which was quite sufficient to make his deportation probable.

They had more than enough cause to arouse their suspicions concerning his character, even though they did not yet know that Casement himself had begun to doubt his servant's honesty. 'I am not sure of Adler,' Casement himself had to write with infinite reluctance in his diary that evening, after he had described his interview with the Imperial Chancellor. 'His air and manner have changed greatly since he came back – or rather since he went away. He confesses that he now "adores Findlay." Findlay "is a man" – "he sticks at nothing – he would roll these God d – d Germans up." For the Germans now, since they held him up at Sassnitz, Adler has scorn and a sense of outraged pride. They treated him badly there – stripped him, split his gloves open, took his gold coin and gave him paper money, extorted seven marks per meal, while he was

detained forty-eight hours their prisoner, pending the order from Berlin to release him, and read aloud to the crowd my letters to my American friends. This last extraordinary piece of stupidity it was that chiefly affects Adler.' That point, no doubt, he had diligently impressed upon his too generous employer. Adler was already finding it much easier to fool his own master than to fool the British Minister – who could always be counted upon to pay out a few hundred kronen more, when Christensen had been spending his master's money recklessly on buying unneeded clothes or personal adornments.

The young man had become definitely anti-German, Casement found to his dismay. He tried to understand it, and found the explanation in a patriotic resentment against the seizure of Norwegian cargoes by the German courts. He began to wish that he had not mentioned to the young man that the Foreign Office had been spreading discreditable stories about his morals. But he thought it necessary to let him know; because the prejudice against the young Norwegian was already so strong that Casement had been obliged to cancel his arrangements for bringing him with him to Limburg. The effect of what he had told him had been unfortunate nevertheless; and it was disconcerting to find that Adler Christensen was now 'exceedingly bitter against the Germans and vowing vengeance' against them. It was, indeed, more than unfortunate; for the young man was to be the whole pivot of the plot to entrap both Findlay and the British warships that were to be lured into attempting his own capture in the North Sea.

Reflecting seriously, Casement had to confess in his own secret diary that 'knowing all I do of his character, of its extraordinary complexity, I should feel gravely disposed to mistrust his fidelity in a matter whence German ships were the issue against British ships. I should even now' – the awful thought had dawned upon him at last, but only to be dismissed as an unworthy imputation – 'be indisposed to trust myself to his schemes. He is clearly beginning to feel that Findlay is a bolder, more uncompromising and reckless rascal than myself – and Adler's deepest affection is won by extreme rascaldom.

Utter unscrupulousness of action, so long as it succeeds, is his ideal – he confesses. He was on my side, he admits, only by my extreme trust in himself. Seeing how fully I trusted him on the voyage over, his honour (or what corresponds to it) came to the top, and he determined to be true as steel to me.

‘Now that he sees me going off on my Irish “journey,” and he not to take part any more in my efforts, and this due to the evil (and indeed quite untruthful) reports of the Berlin police as to his conduct here, his rage against the Germans is almost swallowing up his affection for me. His face is changed. The old boyish eyes and smile are gone, and he does not look me openly in the face. I think he is really in his heart regretting now that – but no! I will not think that even.’

These were melancholy and disturbing thoughts with which to close a day that had begun so triumphantly with his cordial reception by Bethmann Hollweg at the Chancellor’s palace. Already he had begun to feel that Adler Christensen must be sent back to the United States. He spoke to the young Norwegian of it himself that evening, and told him that he ‘would try to get him good work there if he would promise to go straight and quite give up doing the things he confessed to me, the last night before he returned to Moss, he had done.’

But he could not yet dispense with Christensen’s services. So much depended upon their being continued to the bitter end of this duel with Findlay. Even apart from exposing that author of a ‘criminal conspiracy,’ the bogus messages which Casement was able to send to him through Christensen were already having an effect – so Casement firmly believed – upon the British Government’s policy in Ireland. He was pathetically remote from any direct contact with what was happening in Ireland. Yet he had his own clear ideas of what must develop if only the British Government could be compelled to adopt a provocative line in Ireland.

Through neutral countries the German newspapers were able to gather occasional reports of how Ireland was responding to Redmond’s appeal for recruits in the new Irish formations; but they were ready to believe any rumour that seemed

encouraging. By mid-December the German Press was reproducing reports which announced that 'all national Irish newspapers are being suppressed, and their editors and many other Irishmen thrown into prison. Public assemblies are allowed only when attended by a Government commissioner. Instead of drawing on Ireland for volunteers the English Government are obliged to strengthen their Irish garrisons.'

Casement grasped eagerly at every rumour of the kind, accepting as truth every wild exaggeration of the sporadic acts of minor repression to which Mr. Birrell was being driven at rare intervals, against his own sound judgment, by the growing pressure of the anti-Irish junta in the War Office. Redmond's recruiting campaign was still in full swing. Two Irish Divisions had already been fully formed in the south, and a third in Ulster. In the first week of December, Redmond was able to announce at a parade of the Irish Volunteers in County Galway that already eighty-nine thousand Irishmen from Ireland were serving in the Army, either as regular soldiers or as reservists or as new recruits. 'And if you add to them,' he said, 'the tens of thousands of Irish recruits who are going to the colours in Great Britain, and if you further add to them the thousands and thousands of Irishmen who are in the ranks of the recruits coming from Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, it is safe to say that at this moment there are at the very lowest computation one hundred and thirty thousand or one hundred and forty thousand Irishmen with the colours.' From the ranks of the Irish Volunteers alone, he announced some sixteen thousand five hundred recruits had enrolled within three months. In Belfast, with only a quarter of its population Catholic, more than three thousand five hundred Catholics had enrolled among the ten thousand recruits from the city.

Casement read these speeches in *The Times* and the other London newspapers, which he bought regularly in Berlin, and he felt the discouragement that such figures must convey to all his plans. So far he had only made one cursory visit to Limburg Camp. His work there was still all before him. So far, two recruits for his Irish Brigade were all he could count upon

up to date, as his own achievement, in face of the scores of thousands who were throwing up their employment to join the colours in response to Redmond's appeals.

It was more gratifying to read vague reports that trickled through neutral capitals into the German Press. He began to read into them the far-reaching results of his own conspiracies against the egregious British Minister in Christiania. 'Findlay has spun some magnificent tale to the Foreign Office,' he wrote joyfully in his diary, 'and so they are now panicking through Ireland and trying to get hold of the "dangerous" men before my attempted landing comes off.' He had lost all sense of proportion as the obsession of his personal quarrel with Findlay clouded his whole mind. 'The bombardment of the Yorkshire towns,' he could even write, 'will also have helped and will probably be attributed to my malign influence here in Berlin. Findlay will think I got some information by my secret service agency, on which Adler dilated so much, that had shown the Germans that the coast was clear and the British ships were all bottled up. Adler says he assured Findlay I had men devoted to me in the British Navy, and that this conspiracy would do them incalculable harm if they did not capture me.'

'My only hope,' he wrote – in a confession which reveals a growing sense of oppression under the magnitude of his task – 'is that in their fury of rage and fear combined, they' (the British Government) 'will show their hand so openly against Irish nationality that Redmond and his gang of traitors will have to either repudiate England openly or repudiate the cause they have so grossly misrepresented for years and finally so cruelly betrayed. In any case I hope all that is sincere and true in Irish nationality will be outraged by the attacks of the Government and that out of this accursed war of English greed against Germany shall be born once more, in tribulation, in jail, in repression, the spirit of Irish revolt against English tyranny. May it be so!'

It maddened him that he could get no direct news from Ireland. Even when a letter from Professor Kuno Meyer in New York arrived at last, it was miserably discouraging. Kuno

Meyer had seen his friend McGarrity, Judge Cohalan, John Quinn, and even John Devoy. Every one of them, he was told, disapproved of any publication of the Christiania incident. In face of their disapproval, Casement could do nothing – as yet. But the time would surely come. Christmas was now only two days off, but he had an appointment to see Captain Isenthal at the Admiralty, and to complete the plans that Adler Christensen had conceived. Once again he re-told the whole story of the iniquitous Findlay's attempt to capture him, while the Germans listened with polite incredulity, concerned only with the question whether they could hope to obtain any practical advantage from it for themselves.

But they did make a plan before he left them, and he agreed that Adler Christensen was to know nothing of its details. 'Mr. Hammond,' they arranged, was to embark at Gothenburg direct for Christiansund on 8th January. That much the Norwegian servant was to know; and he was to hand on the information to Findlay at Christiania. He was to get copies also of two outline maps of Great Britain and Ireland, with hypothetical mine fields marked on them which would show the Irish Sea closed north and south. These mines, Christensen was to be informed, were to be laid about 15th January; and 'Mr. Hammond's' movements were to be traceable only when he travelled by a small Danish ship from Gothenburg to Christiansund.

That afternoon Casement brought the maps back to Adler, who traced them skilfully enough during the evening, and brought back his tracings to Casement on Christmas Eve. Throughout the day they elaborated the outline of the new yarn that he was to tell Findlay when he got to Norway. Adler, it was now agreed between them, was to say that he had been allowed home for Christmas, and that Casement himself had gone to Vienna that day. The next move was to rest with the German Admiralty.

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Meanwhile the time had come when Casement himself was to undertake in earnest his mission to the Irish prisoners at

Limburg, who had by now been waiting for several weeks of anxious expectation in their special camp. Christmas Day came and went, a melancholy day for Roger Casement, as he passed it in lonely meditation in his hotel, before going to spend the afternoon with kind friends who had pity on him. He knew well what an ordeal he would have to face when he went to talk to the prisoners, but his interview with Bethmann Hollweg had given him complete assurance as to the character and the purpose of the Brigade in which he would ask them to enlist. There was to be no question of being incorporated in the German Army or of fighting in any German war. He had drafted his own constitution and objects for the Brigade with absolute guarantees upon that point.

And two days after Christmas he was summoned to the Foreign Office again, when Zimmermann as Under-Secretary affixed his own signature beside Casement's to the official document, bearing the seal of the Imperial Chancellor, which committed the German Government to a complete and unqualified acceptance of his conditions. The document was in the following terms: —

‘(1) With a view to securing the national freedom of Ireland with the moral and material assistance of the Imperial German Government, an Irish Brigade shall be formed from among the Irish soldiers now prisoners of war in Germany, or other natives of Ireland. The object of the Irish Brigade shall be to fight solely the cause of Ireland, and under no circumstances shall it be employed or directed to any German end.

‘(2) The Irish Brigade shall be formed and shall fight under the Irish flag alone. The Irishmen shall wear a special distinctively Irish uniform, as soon as Irishmen can be got for the purpose either from Ireland or the United States of America. The Brigade shall have only Irish officers. Until such time as Irish officers can be secured, however, German officers will be appointed with the approval of Roger Casement to have disciplinary control of the men; but no military operation shall be ordered or conducted by the German officers of the Irish Brigade during such time as the men are under their control.

‘(3) The Irish Brigade shall be clothed, fed, and efficiently equipped with arms and ammunition by the Imperial German Government on the clear understanding that these are furnished as a free gift to aid the cause of Irish Independence.

‘(4) It is distinctly understood, and is hereby formally declared by the parties to this agreement, that the Irish Brigade shall consist only of Volunteers in the cause of Irish National Freedom; and, as such, no member of the Irish Brigade shall receive pay or monetary reward of any kind from the Imperial German Government during the period for which he shall bear arms in the Irish Brigade.

‘(5) The Imperial German Government undertakes in certain circumstances to send the Irish Brigade to Ireland with efficient military support, and with an ample supply of arms and ammunition to equip the Irish Volunteers in Ireland who may be willing to join them in the attempt to recover Irish Freedom by force of arms. The certain circumstances hereby understood are the following: –

‘(6) In the event of a German naval victory affording the means of reaching the coast of Ireland, the Imperial German Government pledges itself to dispatch the Irish Brigade and a supporting force of German officers and men in German transports with the necessary naval protection to effect a landing on the Irish coast.

‘(7) The opportunity to land in Ireland can only arise if the fortune of war should grant the German Navy a victory that would open with reasonable prospects of success the sea route to Ireland. Should the German Navy not succeed in this effort, the Irish Brigade shall be employed in Germany or elsewhere solely in such a way as Roger Casement may approve as being in strict conformity with Article II. In this event it might be possible to employ the Irish Brigade in Egypt to help the Egyptian people to recover their freedom by driving the British out of Egypt.

‘(8) In the event of the Irish Brigade volunteering for this service, the German Government undertakes to make arrangements with the Austro-Hungarian Government for its trans-

portation through that Empire to Constantinople, and to provide with the Turkish Government for the recognition and acceptance of the Irish Brigade as a Volunteer Corps attached to the Turkish-Egyptian Army in the effort to expel the British from Egypt.

‘(9) In the event of the World War coming to an end without the object of the Irish Brigade having been effected – namely, its landing in Ireland – the German Government undertakes to send each Irishman member of the Irish Brigade who may so desire it to the United States of America with the necessary means to land in that country, in conformity with the United States Immigration laws.

‘(10) In the event of the Irish Brigade landing in Ireland and military operations in that country resulting in the overthrow of British authority and the erection of an independent Irish Government in Ireland, the Imperial German Government will give the Irish independence of such a Government, so established, its fullest moral support, and, both by public recognition and by general goodwill, contribute with sincerity to the establishment of an independent Government in Ireland.

‘Signed:

‘VON ZIMMERMANN, Staat-sekretar, Deutsche
Regierung.

‘ROGER CASEMENT, Irish Envoy.

‘Wilhelm Strasse 75, Berlin, 27th December 1914.’

Armed with this historic document he had set out for Limburg at the beginning of the new year, having decided that he could wait no longer for Father Nicholson’s belated arrival. There had been an entire absence of news concerning his movements, and so much time had elapsed already that Casement saw the absolute necessity of making a bold beginning with his enterprise now that the new year had begun. His heart sank as he thought of the strain that he must face alone, but it was at least something to escape from Berlin, with its vast hotels and crowded streets, and to reach open country where he could take

anyone to sustain their courage by his spiritual ministrations, in face of the constant temptation to become freemen by deserting their regiments, Roger Casement himself was to find in him a friend whose sympathy in his own sufferings never failed him. They had been attracted to each other from their first meeting in Berlin, and Father Crotty, since Casement's death, has never ceased to assert his own deep respect for his character as 'a most fascinating personality – one who was every inch a gentleman, upright, honest, sincere. In all things Ireland, his country, was first and last – her security and prosperity and her religion he loved.'

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In the following days of intolerable strain and of humiliation, when Casement persevered in going daily to the camp, a friendship grew up between Casement and the prison chaplain which was to have most curious after-effects. Father Crotty's presence gave him courage to go back, and he began to spend his days among the prisoners, avoiding political arguments, and following the chaplain as he visited the wounded in the prison hospital, or attending in the chapel when Father Crotty got them together for prayers.

The chaplain's commission from the Holy See extended to all prisoners of war, and at Limburg he found his time fully occupied in ministering to the French and Russian prisoners as well as his own countrymen. It was Monsignor O'Riordan of the Irish College in Rome who had secured his appointment as chaplain to the camp, but the sanction of the General of the Dominican Order, who was a Frenchman, had been obtained as well as the permission of the Vatican. His papers were signed by the Cardinal Secretary of State, and though his nomination had been the result of Casement's personal solicitation to Monsignor O'Riordan, and was instigated directly by the German Minister at the Vatican, it was to serve all prisoners of war, irrespective of nationality, that he arrived at Limburg on the Lahn.

'I was a friend to all,' Father Crotty has told the present writer, 'and I hope I did much to comfort the prisoners of war,

and their friends and relations, with whom I frequently corresponded. I interested myself in all prisoners of war, and ministered to them without distinction of nationality. In the four years, 1914-1918, French, Americans, Canadians, Italians, Russians (Lithuanians), and English boys had me near their pillows to carry or send to their mothers or wives or children their last farewell. I travelled miles and at great inconvenience, not only to Irish and English, but to all nationalities that claimed my ministrations. I did not hesitate to work in many German parishes when priests were absent at the front, and ministered the Sacraments and celebrated Masses for the German congregations who sought my ministrations.'

Such was the atmosphere into which Casement, consumed with hatred for the British Government, yet harassed beyond endurance by the distrustful attitude of the Germans with whom he had sought an alliance, had been unexpectedly thrown by his own loneliness and discouragement when he reached the Irish prison camp. It had been his first intimate contact with the realities of war, and as he followed the Irish chaplain among the wounded or begged permission to be allowed to kneel in the chapel with them at their prayers, a sense of peace and of consolation that had long departed from him crept over his jaded spirit. It brought back so many infinitely poignant memories of his own earlier years - of his own missions as the comforter of the afflicted, to the naked, scarcely human natives in their lives of misery along the Congo and the Putumayo. It recalled those haunting, terror-stricken faces, those maimed hands and arms, those bodies covered with the scars of innumerable lashings, that had maddened him when he wandered as the envoy of the British Government among the swamps and forests of the Equator.

Memories, endless memories, came crowding back. He remembered how helpless his own position had been as a consular agent with kind intentions, promising as little as he could, in the knowledge that scarcely any of his promises could ever be fulfilled, discouraging every gleam of hope that even his mere presence as an investigator had aroused. No statue

in his honour would ever be erected among the swampy villages of equatorial Africa or America. Probably even his name would never be known to those whom he had helped to liberate and to save from the murderous extinction that was devouring tribes which had once led their own simple primitive existence among the forests and the wide-stretching rivers. There was only the legend of a tall, black-bearded man who had come from nowhere, accompanied by a bulldog who lay at his feet while they poured out their tale of tragedy to him, and who had gone away as mysteriously as he had come – yet whose coming had been the beginning of a new era of peace and freedom. How he had changed in the years! He had seen horrors on the Amazon which made the lot of Leopold's rubber slaves in Africa seem almost enviable by comparison. And in the Putumayo also he had put an end to barbarities. He had driven a reluctant Government to wreak vengeance upon the torturers of the native tribes. How the world had changed within those brief four years! Crippled with ill-health, and now a neurotic, political nomad whom no one would take seriously, he was eating his heart out at a hotel in that little German town while thousands of Irish prisoners, encaged behind entanglements of electric wire, would not even listen to him when he offered them freedom if they would serve a cause he believed to be their own, which had inspired his whole life since his return to civilisation from the tropics.

He was so lonely and so forlorn a figure that even the prisoners pitied him as the days passed, when he came amongst them, merely accompanying the chaplain who was the one friend left to them in their own misery. They could see how Father Crotty had grown attached to the shy, nervous man who arrived so mournfully to follow him when he visited the wounded and the sick. They heard that Casement was using whatever influence he could to obtain more facilities for them to use the chapel. Their feelings towards him softened as they found him kneeling with them, holding a rosary which the chaplain had given him, and they could see his bowed figure shaken with the agony of his awful memories and of his disillusion.

Then he had gone back to Berlin, and the old monotonous routine of camp duties and fatigue parties had continued for them, unbroken as before. Only the printed notices posted on every hut, appealing to them to join his Irish Brigade, remained to remind them of his visit; and they could find means of expressing their own feelings of constant and fierce disgust towards the few who became known as having accepted his solicitations to betray their oaths of loyalty.

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In the first week of excitement during his mission to Limburg Camp, Casement lacked the energy even to write regularly in his diary. Nearly a fortnight passed before he wrote again on 15th January in his hotel at Limburg, and he resumed with a melancholy note that he had been 'ill and greatly upset at the failure of my hopes.' But new possibilities were now impending. On that very day the deferred departure of the Danish ship in which he was supposed to be setting out for Ireland was due to take place. 'She is due to leave Gothenburg to-day,' he wrote, 'to-night, some time, and it is to-morrow the "incident" should come to its head.'

Three days before, he had a letter from Adler Christensen in Christiania reporting progress. The young man had had another interview with Findlay, who had seen him at once when he had entered the Legation at night by the back door, of which he had been given the key. Christensen had spoken mysteriously of German expeditions, of three or four transports, of battleships full of German troops, which he believed that Casement had at his disposal ready for a rush to land in Ireland. This absurd letter encouraged Casement enormously, and he was overjoyed by a further telegram which announced that there was 'good news.'

It was more than enough to console him for his own failure with the Irish prisoners of war. He wrote to Richard Meyer at the Berlin Foreign Office 'telling him that I thought there was no hope of getting the soldiers to do anything, and asking to be informed of the new "plot" arranged against me now.' What could the 'good news' be of which Christensen had

telegraphed? 'I hope it may mean several of their pirate craft caught in their own net laid for the one Irishman to-day they are really afraid of! God! They are afraid of me,' he continued. 'My price has gone up to £10,000, and poor Adler is anxious to get their money to "give me" (poor soul!) so that I may fight them with their own "purse." I have laughed at this, and told him that we must never touch a penny of this money "given" to him.'

Yet five days passed and still no word came of any *coup* resulting from his own deep-laid plan. Nothing but a report in *The Times* of a question by Lord Curzon in the House of Lords, in reply to which Lord Crewe had stated that 'very sensible punishment was due to Sir Roger Casement.' Meanwhile he had been feverishly drafting a long manifesto to Sir Edward Grey, in which he proposed to expose the entire story of Findlay's conduct towards him in a neutral country. He had decided which of the Ambassadors and Ministers in Berlin were to receive copies of it – fourteen of them in all.

Another long day wore through, and still no word came of any *coup* in the North Sea. It dawned on him that it was now even 'highly probable' that Findlay and the Foreign Office had both discovered he was fooling them. How everything hung fire! No word from Meyer in Berlin; no word from von Wedel, 'head of the British section.' Worst of all, no word even of Father Nicholson, who was to have left New York on 18th December, but who by later reports might not yet have started even on the 30th. At last Meyer wrote. But his letter only deepened the mystery and gloom, for he said not one word of Christiania. 'The German F.O. are very peculiar people,' Casement wrote bitterly, 'and one never knows where one is with them.'

What was he to do in face of such an attitude of baffling suspicion, in face of his own failure in every direction? 'My own course is not at all clear,' he wrote mournfully in his diary on the dreary day of 15th January at Limburg. 'Now that I have practically abandoned the idea of the Irish Brigade, there seems little object in remaining in Germany. The

Government will not want me, I am sure. Once the hope of the Irish Brigade is gone, they will feel little interest in the other aspects of the Irish Question. Those remain for later settlement – when after this war the great question facing all maritime nations will present itself more acutely than ever. The control of the seas by one power, and that power the least tied to European obligations, is a standing threat to the welfare of all the peoples of Europe. This war will demonstrate that. It has done so already.’

He stayed on in Limburg for a full week more, and at last the arrival of Father Nicholson in Italy brought new hope and new courage in his flagging efforts. Meyer wrote to Casement from the Foreign Office to say that the American priest had now reached Rome, and that the Government proposed to keep him for some days in Berlin. But Casement’s patience could hold out no longer. He hurried back to Berlin on the 23rd, in deep anxiety concerning the fate of his servant’s mission to Christiania. No answer had ever yet been given to his repeated inquiries, either by Meyer or von Wedel; and it was not until he reached Berlin that he discovered the true reason. They had not even told him that Christensen had been back in Berlin for several days.

But now at last he learned the startling truth. The young Norwegian’s mission had produced one definite result. He had induced Findlay after much argument to sign a written document promising him in black and white that he would be paid £5000 sterling as soon as he delivered Casement into British hands. He had brought the precious document to the Foreign Office and there it had been kept by the German authorities, filed with Casement’s own papers, and treated as a piece of Government property.

Casement’s indignation and dismay knew no bounds when he heard the news. ‘They have wilfully kept me in ignorance of a fact of supreme importance to myself and the cause of Ireland,’ he wrote, ‘and have taken possession of a document they have no more right to than to my purse.’ He had insisted upon having it shown to him, and Meyer had produced reluctantly three

bound volumes of Foreign Office papers, all dealing with his own mission to Germany. Among them he saw for the first time, already stamped with the German Foreign Office seal, the following manuscript written on a sheet of official note-paper under the address: –

‘British Legation,
‘Christiania,
‘Norway.

‘On behalf of the British Government I promise that if, through information given by Adler Christensen, Sir Roger Casement be captured, either with or without his companions, the said Adler Christensen is to receive from the British Government the sum of £5000 to be paid as he may desire.

‘Adler Christensen is also to enjoy personal immunity and to be given a passage to the United States should he desire it.

‘M. DE G. FINDLAY,
‘H.B.M. Minister.’

That letter, wrote Casement in his diary that evening, ‘is the most damning piece of evidence, I suppose, ever voluntarily given by a Government against itself.’ He had demanded at once that Meyer should hand it over to him. But Meyer’s hands had been tied, and he could do no more than say that the Foreign Office were keeping it in safe custody. They would, he was sure, hand it back to Casement whenever he should desire it. In the meantime, he could do no more than allow Casement to copy it. But the excitement caused by Findlay’s own signature to this highly compromising document was not more intense than the account which he received from Meyer at the same time, in the form of a pencilled letter from Christensen, describing how the Norwegian sailor had succeeded in forcing the British Minister to put his offer in writing. ‘I must tell you,’ wrote his strange servant, ‘about how I got him to give me a written guarantee – you know you told me that was what you really wanted. And I got it finally, but we almost came to blows about it, and I told him to go and . . . – but it would take

too long to put it down here. You will enjoy hearing it. I bet you nobody ever talked to him as I did; he was right pale in the face.'

Well indeed might that dignified diplomat have turned pale if even one-tenth of Adler Christensen's story was true! Casement himself never doubted it; and even the fact that he had himself taught his faithful Adler to become a most ingenious and resourceful liar in his dealings with Mr. Findlay, did not cause him the slightest suspicion as to how much of the exciting story should be discounted. He could only wait for the full version of the story; Christensen's letter had been held up by the Foreign Office until his own return from Limburg, and the continuation of it was somewhat disquieting. It had explained already in a roundabout way how it was that the great *coup* about capturing the British warships had come to nothing. Christensen, it appeared, had impressed upon the British Minister that Casement had precious documents with him which ought to be captured; and Mr. Findlay had, according to his lurid story, decided that it would be better to postpone the capture of Casement until his servant could be with him, in order to make sure that the papers would not be thrown overboard.

Even that preposterous story had satisfied Casement at the moment, and now he was confronted with Christensen's further announcement that Captain Isenthal of the Admiralty had abandoned the earlier scheme. 'If they want to keep at it,' said the sly young Norwegian, 'they have to produce facts, because you can't fool Mr. Findlay any longer, and that I would not try.' Nevertheless he announced that he had formed a new plan which he was quite certain that Mr. Findlay would 'fall for' – 'but they must do that,' he explained, 'and I am going on board myself and proceed across the North Sea. I want to see them go up in the air, and I must do that to make it look real, and then it is up to Mr. Meyers and them whether it will succeed or not.'

Adler's story was fantastic enough to arouse the suspicions of the most unwary. But Casement's hatred of Findlay had already blinded him to every sense of precaution. He longed to hear the Norwegian's own version of how he had got the signed promise

of £5000, and on the following day he was able at last to write down a full account of it in his diary. Christensen, it appeared, had been offered £500 down in cash, but 'he swore and said he would not go a step further in the matter unless Findlay gave him a written pledge.' Casement set down with delight the young man's exuberant account of all that had been said between them. 'I swore at him,' Adler had told his master, 'cursed him and told him to — himself (a fearful sailor's sarcasm) — and left him. He stormed and protested, and said his word was that of the British Government, and he had pledged it to me. I left the Legation and he sent after me, and brought me back and remonstrated again. I stuck to my guns, was more and more insolent and rude, and stalked off. As I got to the gate down the avenue the footman ran after me, and said the Minister wished to see me. I told him to tell Mr. Findlay to — himself, and went on. Then a man came to the Grand Hotel, and asked me to go to the Legation again — and so I went. Mr. Findlay said he would give me the written promise, and I said, "All right, but here and now. I want to see you write it with your own hand," whereupon he sat down and did it, I standing by.'

As a crowning climax to the whole story, Christensen showed Casement the draft of an insulting letter he had sent to Findlay after his safe return to Berlin with the incriminating document in his pocket. Only the conclusion need be quoted, as a sample of its illiterate vituperation: 'You tell me to go to Hell,' the young Norwegian had written (or so he said) to the British Minister in Christiania, 'and I would lose out both ways. When I seen the fuss you made over that little money I can see myself getting the £5000. I will get mine and we will see if it won't cost your goverment more now than if you had been liberal to me. The People I do busenes with I like to see them produce as well as me. You can thank yourself. *Au revoir*.'

Next day Casement was still full of excitement over the faithful Adler's latest scheme to trap Findlay. The plan was still to catch 'Findlay's ships.' '*Nous verrons*,' Casement wrote contentedly in his diary. 'I have caught more than that. I have

caught the British Government *in flagrante delicto* – and with all the difficulties put in my way, too, by this stupid pig-headed German Government. And now these men actually have the barefaced audacity to seize my proof and regard it as a State paper of their wretchedly run Foreign Office. Truly they merit all the opprobriums Billy Tyrrell heaped on them in the London Foreign Office that November day in 1912, when he was discharging his soul into my ears – and Lichnowsky outside the door and announced as he spoke! It is almost impossible to have true dealings with them. You never know their mind – save that if there is a wrong way to tackle a human problem they are likely to choose it.’

His opinion of them had altered since the days before the war when he had regarded the Germans as the models of every sort of efficiency in administration! What a change since only a few weeks before, when he had regarded the bombardment of Scarborough as a magnificent proof of German enterprise and efficiency. Now, when news came of the first Zeppelin raid over the East Coast, Casement was already denouncing them in his diary for ‘rejoicing over a silly exploit – that can only damage the German cause in the eyes of the world – for the English will represent it through all their myriad channels of public perversion as a “deliberate murder of women and children.”’

Disillusionment with the German methods was beginning to play havoc with his nerves. He had begun to wonder anxiously concerning his own future, even while the war lasted. What might happen after the war had long ceased to interest him personally; for he knew well how completely he had staked his whole future on the mission to Germany that he had undertaken entirely on his own responsibility. ‘I told von Wedel to-day,’ he wrote in his diary on 4th January, ‘that were I sure of getting over I should return to U.S.A.: but the risks are too great. And yet I know not what to do. To stay in Berlin or in Germany, idle, inactive, and with the huge disappointment of the Irish Brigade failure staring me in the face, and with no hope of further action by the German Government anent Ireland – is a policy of despair. Besides I have not the means to live here.

Life is very expensive, and I must stay at expensive hotels and incur constant outlays. It would be better to return to Norway – convict Findlay up to the hilt, get H.M. Government exposed, and if necessary return to Germany, should Father Nicholson succeed with the soldiers. I shall talk things over with him to-day and decide quickly.’

Already three weeks of priceless time had been lost since the new year began – ‘deliberately wasted by this wretched crew at the German Foreign Office in the kidnapping of my Findlay letter. I feel I cannot trust them – and that it is useless to rely on such stupid – and selfish – people.’

What did the Germans think of him? He had no notion of how much his movements had been suspect to them since his first arrival in the country. Was he not a ‘mystery man’ whose life had been spent on the Equator, held in high honour by the British Foreign Office, entrusted with difficult missions which scarcely any other man would have been competent to undertake, and rewarded not only by decorations and by a knighthood, but by unqualified confidence, by the full circulation of his personal reports, until he had become one of the pivotal and indispensable diplomatists in the British service?

What, they might well ask, was the real purpose of such a man in his unaccredited mission to Germany as an Irish Nationalist immediately after the outbreak of war? In Ireland itself, he had been almost unknown. In America he had gone among Fenians and rabid Anglophobes, who had formerly denounced him as the paid agent of English companies who were seeking to exploit the discontent of native populations in order that British enterprise might capture the opportunities that Belgians and South Americans had misused. How much importance could they really attach to the present goodwill towards him of reckless Irish agitators like John Devoy? How much could they attach even to the letters of recommendation he had obtained from the German Ambassador at Washington on the strength of John Devoy’s enthusiasm for a new disciple?

He could be judged only by the programme he had attempted in Germany, and above all by his results. Could even he

claim that they had been anything but a miserable fiasco on every side? He could show nothing accomplished beyond having induced the German Government to issue a nebulous declaration that it sympathised with the claims of Irish Nationalism, and to sign an agreement with him to assist him in a hopeless attempt to seduce the Irish prisoners of war from their allegiance. Even to attempt such a seduction was clearly discreditable in German eyes; success might have justified it, but how far had he succeeded? Hooted and derided by his own countrymen at Limburg, almost requiring a bodyguard to escort him from their camp wherever he spoke of Irish politics, he had done more to stiffen their spirit in resisting and enduring the privations of imprisonment than any other means which could have been devised.

As for Findlay and the Christiania affair – even if he could prove his allegations to the hilt, would any Government have allowed him to pass into a hostile country in war-time without using every possible means to capture him? The mystery was rather that he had not been captured when capture would have been so easy. Was Findlay really in earnest in trying to capture him? Was the whole business a preposterous bluff? And if so, what manner of man was he who would seriously attempt to bluff the German Foreign Office with a cock-and-bull story that depended from start to finish upon the credibility of a disreputable young Norwegian, whom he had picked up in the streets of New York, and whom the German police had already found ample reason to view with suspicion?

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Every one of his ventures had come to nothing, and the Germans watched his movements with growing suspicion, still uncertain as to whether he were really a self-appointed and half-crazy anti-British agent, or a British spy. All confidential relations between him and the German Foreign Office had ceased and he was now being kept strictly at arm's length. The one thing he could claim to have done was to get that incriminating document against Mr. Findlay; and the Germans

kept that safely under lock and key. They were unmoved by his furious resentment of their own action in taking possession of it, and listened with sceptical boredom when he told them of his next move, which was to write an open letter to Sir Edward Grey that would expose the 'criminal conspiracy' in detail.

For days Casement was torn by an agony of doubt as to how he should next proceed. He made appointments with the American Consul-General, Mr. Lay, telling him that he was going to ask his professional services to attest a document that would be brought to him. Even Lay had demurred, and talked uneasily about the necessity of consulting the American Ambassador. Father Nicholson was the only friend in Berlin in whom he could really confide, and even he had to leave Berlin on 27th January, after spending the whole previous day with Casement at the Foreign Office and elsewhere. Casement had brought the American priest to see the Findlay document in von Wedel's room, and there Casement had copied it in his presence.

After Nicholson had gone on to Limburg, he returned to his miserable solitude to spend hour after hour in drafting and continually rewriting the letter to Edward Grey. Blücher still gave him some encouragement, and consoled him by saying that he would complain personally to von Jagow about the way Casement was being treated. Then once again he had gone to see von Wedel, who expressed approval when he said that he was going to make public his letter to Edward Grey, and that he would go to Christiania to see the matter through.

Yet another set-back followed when Adler Christensen, who was now encamped in a different hotel, wrote him a long letter to discourage his idea of going to Norway. They had talked it over; Casement remained unsuspecting even when his servant showed such plain anxiety that he should not go near Findlay. 'Here is three things you must take into consideration,' the young sailor wrote in his illiterate hand, 'if yours wont to catch Finlay. And I know Finlay. What will Mr. Finlay think when he hears off you in Norway? only three reasons he will say.

‘(1) and he will proceed to find out what it is, that you are coming to embark from Norway for Ireland, in which case he will want to take you and your companions on the high seas. He will want to risk kidnapping you. He will want yours all and he can’t do it wholesale:

‘(2) that you have had a row with the Germans, in which case you are no danger to England, at the present any way. He will probably have you watched, but I don’t think he would be so keen then:

‘(3) that you are coming there on some mission or other for the German government, in which case I have no doubt he would take steps to have you silenced. You must not be angry because I presume to tell you what to do. This is only suggestions. But I don’t want you to go over to Norway without some plan off Campaign. And I got due respect for Mr. Finlay. And he might turn the tables on you yet. I could write much more. Hope you will come at 8½ to-night and tell me what you have decided.

‘I remain as ever faithfully your

‘ADLER.’

Yet no shadow of suspicion passed across Casement’s mind. Instead, he continued writing his letter to Sir Edward Grey. He decided that on Sunday he would leave for Christiania himself, armed with his open letter, which he would lay before the Norwegian Government, and accompanied by three detectives whom von Wedel promised to send with him as an escort. All the next day the typists were busy making copies of the letter for distribution to the various Embassies. Next morning he and Adler and the three detectives from the Berlin Foreign Office were to set out on their momentous journey.

The snow lay thick, and it was bitterly cold on that Sunday morning, the last day of January, when Casement set out alone to walk from his hotel to Stettinbahnhof, for the train that was to carry him to Norway. Adler Christensen had come early to collect his luggage, and they met at the railway station. The boy’s florid face looked anxious, and Casement guessed at once that some new obstacle had arisen. Was nothing ever going to

run smoothly – for him who had conducted so many daring enterprises without the smallest hitch in the years before the war? Yet the obstacle was insuperable indeed. Young Christensen had given him the wrong hour for his departure, and he had only now discovered that the train could not arrive at Sassnitz until after the boat had started. They ought to have left Berlin the night before.

There was nothing to be done; and Casement could only wait with a sense of deepening futility and despair, until Richard Meyer arrived at the station with the escort of three detectives who were to accompany him. The plan had gone wrong once more, and they had to return to their headquarters, to come back again later in the day to catch the evening train. So the day dragged through; and at last, when they were all collected again at the railway station, Meyer arrived hurriedly with an anxious face, bearing a warning to Casement from the German Admiralty that they believed the mail boat might be stopped even in the Baltic by an English submarine to demand Casement's surrender. It was for Casement himself to decide whether he would go on in face of such a risk. But his patience was exhausted and he decided without a moment's hesitation to go on.

So at long last the enterprise had started, in spite of many misadventures. Christensen travelled with him in the same carriage, and the three detectives in another near at hand. Just before midnight they had reached Stralsund, and Casement, staggering wearily from his carriage, made his way to the Bahnhof Hotel, too tired even to undress himself. He threw himself on to his bed, his mind a whirl of anxieties and doubts. The submarine worried him little enough; but it was the thought of British power, even in a neutral country, that made his blood run cold as he reflected upon his own 'penniless and defenceless position.' 'To go out single-handed to thus challenge the mightiest Government in the world and to charge them publicly with infamous criminal conspiracy through their accredited representative is a desperate act. I have no money, no friends, no support, no Government save that of the *One*

bent on destroying me, to appeal to. They are all-potent and will not sacrifice Findlay without a fight, and in that fight they must win.' Such, as he recorded them afterwards, had been his bitter and desponding reflections as he lay awake through the long hours of that cold winter night.

Before daylight he had risen to catch the train on to Sassnitz, and on arriving there, he had made his way to the Monopol Hotel to wait for the boat. There was still time for a last conference with his sailor servant; and he knew how his servant had been opposed throughout to his setting foot in Norway. His own nerves had reduced him to a state of impotence and indecision for weeks past; and now that sleepless night at the frontier had broken down the last remnant of his former courage. Young Christensen saw his opportunity at once, and pleaded with him in the name of everything he held sacred that he should turn back and not run the risk of capture or imprisonment by landing in Norway. Casement's will had gone, and as he listened to the impassioned entreaties of the servant in whom he still trusted, he allowed his spirit to be overborne. Fear seized him, and he burned a number of papers in sheer panic at the possibility of being arrested, or even to avoid the possibility of their being mislaid. And then, having informed the three German detectives that he was cancelling the whole expedition he sent a telegram to the Foreign Office in Berlin stating that he was coming back.

It was a melancholy return, yet Richard Meyer showed no outward sign of distrust when Casement appeared again to call on him and explain the reason why he had abandoned his project. The three detectives had been armed in readiness for any eventuality, and Meyer told him rather coldly that a German cruiser had been standing by, ready to escort the mail boat on which he was to have travelled. But the explanation – that he was poverty-stricken and defenceless – was sufficient to satisfy Casement himself. He did not stop to think what sort of report the secret police would add to their dossier concerning yet another of his futile and unconvincing schemes.

Nor did it occur to him that further suspicions might be

aroused, when Meyer informed him that, by a curious coincidence a German-Irish Society had just been founded in Berlin, and that it had already subscribed fifty thousand marks for the promotion of the Irish cause, which was to be placed at Case-ment's own disposal immediately as he might require it. Case-ment had emphasised his own poverty so strongly as the chief reason why he dared not challenge Findlay in Norway; yet even now he refused this immediate offer of a substantial subsidy, saying that he could not possibly accept German assistance, and that only the Irish-Americans could decide.

Meyer even offered, in the name of the German Government, to buy from him the original of Findlay's incriminating document. But that also he refused. His mind was wholly occupied with his letter to Sir Edward Grey; and it never dawned upon him that his refusal to accept aid in practical matters was an attitude that could only strengthen the growing suspicion that he was in Germany only as a British spy.

He had determined that a new phase was now to begin in earnest. On the day of his return he completed all his arrangements for the publication of his letter to Sir Edward Grey that was to open what he called in his diary the 'newspaper war.' The letter was now written and typed many times. It had been difficult to keep its length down when his mind was full to bursting with the Christiania episode; but he had condensed the whole story of Mr. Findlay's attempt to bribe Adler Christensen into a document that would not fill more than two columns of a newspaper. Incidentally it was to make clear to all the world that he had burned his boats utterly in undertaking an act of open hostility to the British Government.

'The question between the British Government and myself has never been, as you are fully aware,' his letter said, 'a matter of a pension, of a reward, of a decoration. I served the British Government faithfully and loyally as long as it was possible for me to do so, and when it became impossible, I resigned. When later it became impossible for me to use the pension assigned to me by law, I voluntarily abandoned that income, as I had previously resigned the post from which it was derived, and as I

now proceed to divest myself of the honours and distinctions that at various times have been conferred upon me by His Majesty's Government.

'I came to Europe from the United States last October,' the letter went on, 'in order to make sure that whatever might be the course of this war, my own country, Ireland, should suffer from it the minimum of harm. . . . To save Ireland from some of the calamities of war was worth the loss to myself of pension and honours, and was even worth the commission of an act of technical "treason." I decided to take all the risks and to accept all the penalties the Law might attach to my action. I did not, however, bargain for risks and penalties that lay outside the Law as far as my own action lay outside the field of moral turpitude. . . . I was prepared to face charges in a Court of Law: I was not prepared to meet waylaying, kidnapping, suborning of dependents, or "knocking on the head" – in fine, all the expedients your representative in a neutral country invoked when he became aware of my presence there.' And then followed the whole story of the Findlay episode, concluding with the following outburst:

'It was not until the 3rd ultimo that Mr. Findlay committed himself to give my protector the duly signed and formal pledge of reward and immunity in the name of the British Government, for the crime he was being instigated to commit, that is now in my possession. I transmit to you herewith a photograph of this document. At a date compatible with my own security against the clandestine guarantees and immunities of the British Minister in Norway, I shall proceed to lay before the legitimate authorities in that country the original document, and the evidence in my possession that throws light on the proceedings of His Majesty's Government. To that Government, through you, Sir, I now beg to return the insignia of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George, the Coronation Medal of His Majesty King George V, and any other medal, honour or distinction conferred upon me by His Majesty's Government of which it is possible for me to divest myself.'

At last the typewritten copies were now being handed out.

He was preparing to mobilise against the British Foreign Office precisely the same methods of arousing public opinion which it had employed in sending out broadcast to the Embassies his own reports upon the misdeeds of other Governments in the Congo and in the Putumayo. A special messenger brought copies of his letter by hand to every Embassy or Legation in Berlin. Three copies were sent by him also to Rome, begging that they should be used publicly by his Irish friends, and that they should be shown to the Pope personally.

The strain had told fearfully upon him, and he was making plans to leave Berlin for some days to stay quietly outside until the 'newspaper war' began in full blast. He tried the Palast Hotel at Potsdam, which had been recommended to him by the manager of the Continental; but when he arrived, and they found that he could speak only English, he met with such a rude reception that he 'returned to Berlin in despair.' Meanwhile a polite letter had arrived from the Swedish Minister acknowledging the letter to Sir Edward Grey, and saying that he had sent it on at once to Stockholm. But the letter from the Portuguese Minister had arrived almost at the same hour saying that its transmission would 'exceed the legal rights of his Legation,' and returning the copy to Casement without forwarding it.

Meyer came round to his hotel to report progress; but a change had come over Meyer's attitude since the Findlay document had been confiscated by the Foreign Office, and still more since Casement's unexpected abandonment of his mission to Norway. Meyer expressed a belief that in Italy, where pro-Ally feeling was beginning to run high, there would be difficulty in getting the letter to Sir Edward Grey published. It would appear first, he believed, in Vienna; the German Government would then release it for their own Press. But Casement found nowadays that even his friend Meyer – who had accompanied him so joyfully on his first arrival in Berlin – had become 'so secretive and lacking in frankness that he tells me nothing. I am treated by him as a sort of tool or agent – to be directed and used, but never kept informed or referred to, or consulted. Only directed.'

It was more than his weary spirit could bear longer, and he decided at once to take refuge outside Berlin for a few days' rest. At Grünewald there was a sanatorium where he could at least find shelter; and there, after securing Meyer's consent, he went to rest for a few days until the storm should break.

There at least he could find peace, and time to write up his diary; but his next entry in it described how he was eating his heart out in such mournful solitude. He had no 'military pass' and the secret police had just sent to demand one, and he could only write bitterly that 'it is highly possible they will bungle things, and I may be hailed off to the jail.'

It was the last entry he was to make, for his courage had gone from him utterly, and he faced the future already with despair. Not until more than a year later did he begin another diary in which he alluded to the cessation of the daily record which he had begun with such high hopes when he sailed in the Norwegian vessel from the United States to make his way in disguise to Germany. 'I stopped that diary,' he wrote on the eve of his departure for Ireland in the spring of 1916, 'when it became clear that I was being played with, fooled, and used, by a most selfish and unscrupulous Government for its own sole petty interests. I did not wish to record the misery I felt or to say the things my heart prompted. But to-day it is my head compels me to the unwelcome task.'

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A whole year had passed before Casement resumed the daily narrative. They had been long months of bitter disillusionment and heart-broken loneliness, relieved only by the devotion of a few new friends. The storm over the publication of his letter to Sir Edward Grey had broken and been forgotten in the cataclysm which engulfed one country after another. He had gone to Munich to seek a change, while his movements were watched more jealously than before by the secret police, who were more perplexed than ever as to whether he was a crazy and futile adventurer, or a secret agent of the British Government whose opportunity to serve his former employers might at any moment

arrive. There had been occasional visits to the Camp at Limburg, or to the small town of Wunsdorff, where his 'Irish Brigade' were transferred, and where their conduct¹⁰ was making them more and more unpopular with the people of the town. But his active work was done, and he could only count the days while his black hair turned to grey, and a haggard, haunted look crept over the handsome face that had once been so full of courage and idealism.

It was in Munich that he met the friend who was to be entrusted with his papers when he left Germany in the end, Dr. Charles E. Curry, an Irish-American who had been resident in Germany for some years. An Egyptian friend had made them acquainted at the hotel where Casement had taken rooms, and Curry had been attracted to the lonely, romantic-looking stranger who was still unable even to make himself understood in a foreign country. 'We soon became such intimate friends,' wrote Dr. Curry in the Preface to the German Diaries which he edited, 'that when I moved out with my family to the Ammersee for the summer vacation at the end of May, Sir Roger Casement requested me to engage quarters for him there. I succeeded in securing two comfortable rooms for my friend in the country inn at Riederau: whereupon Sir Roger left Munich and joined us on the rural shores of the quiet lake. He was so happy and contented in his new environment, away from the noise and bustle of the city, that he remained in Riederau till late into the autumn. When we all returned to town, at the close of the summer vacation, Sir Roger still kept his rooms in the little country inn, that he might spend at least the week-end there. It was, in fact, not until after Christmas, when Sir Roger broke down completely in health, that he could be induced to give up his summer quarters on the lake.'

He had gone down to Hamburg after leaving the sanatorium towards the end of February 'staying in a very fine and beautiful house,' that overlooked the Alster, a big lake. He had left Christensen in Berlin, where he wrote to him affectionately, telling him of a nightmare in which he dreamed that he had lost Findlay's document, and urging him above all to be reason-

able in spending money. 'Don't spend all that 250 marks on the suit,' he wrote. 'Remember once you begin spending money on things you like, the number of things increases with each one you buy – and soon the money is gone. I cannot get you more – or give you another five thousand marks once this goes – and you are not yet in U.S.A.' But the young Norwegian's habits had become deplorably expensive. On the same day he was writing a letter to Casement to announce that he had 'bought a nice trunk and a watch.'

What Casement really wanted to know was what the Scandinavian papers were saying about his letter to Sir Edward Grey. Adler's first report was a hilarious letter which announced that one of the smaller Norwegian papers had commented sceptically on the whole story, saying that a man in Mr. Findlay's position could never have engaged in such discussions with a servant, and that Christensen had been obviously fooling his employer. Christensen himself wrote to say that he discerned Findlay's hand in the newspaper article, and 'had been laughing at it ever since.' 'It looks like he tries to deny every thing, and this is a piece of clever blackmailing on a poor innocent virtuos man that he did not want to have anything to do with a scoundrel like me, and like the innocent virtuos man he is sent me away.'

It was reassuring to find that the young man took it all so cheerfully; but his extravagance was a real source of worry while Casement's diminished resources were fast running out. 'Now don't go and be foolish with the money,' Casement had to write again in earnest expostulation. 'You will soon not have a cent. Remember one-twentieth of five thousand marks is 250, and I gave you 250. If you spend the twentieth part inside a few days, where will be the whole in two months? You are fearfully wasteful of money, my dear faithful old Adler, much more so than I am even – because you buy things you don't need at all – like that raincoat and the gloves, etc. I have *no* gloves, and you have about six pairs! And face and complexion blooms! And God knows what. All you need is some healthy good work to keep your mind occupied, and the sooner this

d – d Findlay scoundrel and his infernal mentor, Grey, are polished off and done with the better.’

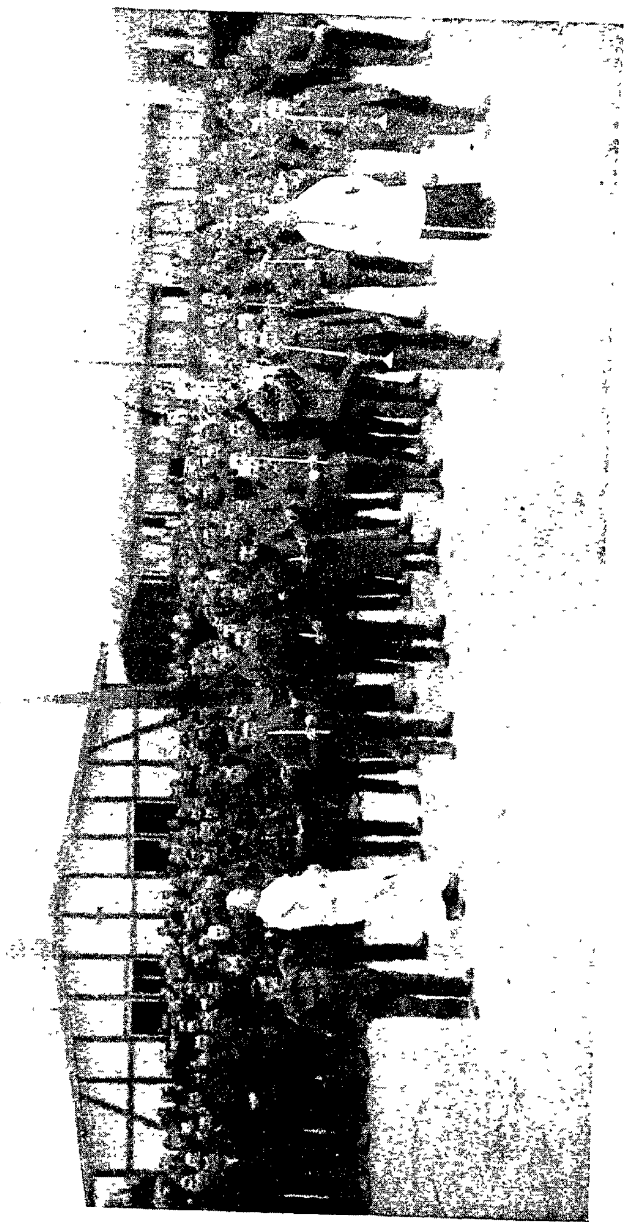
One advantage of being in Hamburg – which he found so much more to his liking than Berlin – was that he could meet Herr Ballin of the Hamburg-Amerika Line, and through him at least he had hopes of arranging for a free passage back to America for his irrepressible servant. The young man had become notorious in Berlin, and Casement’s association with him had given rise to many ugly rumours, doing great injury to his own reputation. It was an intense relief when the arrangements were completed, and Adler Christensen sailed for America.

Within less than a year Casement was to hear of his treacherous behaviour there; and the German Foreign Office did not spare his feelings in reminding him continually of Christensen’s disgrace.²⁰

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He had no heart to continue the recruiting of the Irish Brigade. Even Father Nicholson’s arrival, with his American buoyancy, and his undiminished enthusiasm, could scarcely bring back hope. There were protests almost at once among the prisoners when it became evident that Father Nicholson was deliberately utilising his position as a prisoners’ chaplain to conduct recruiting propaganda among them. Prisoners announced that they would not go to any Mass or other religious service conducted by Father Nicholson, and Father Crotty, whose complete detachment from politics had earned their unqualified confidence, had difficulty in persuading them that the American priest remained a priest in his religious ministrations, whatever his political beliefs or activities might be.

A new cause of resentment had arisen, when the Irish prisoners found that their rations were curtailed. They attributed it at once to Casement’s activities, and were convinced that they were being punished for refusing to do as he desired; though in fact the reduction in rations was simply the result of the British naval blockade. No proof was ever forthcoming that the Irish prisoners were specially penalised, though it was



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quite natural that they believed it themselves. And no accusation wounded Casement's sensitive nature more acutely than the charge, which was brought against him at his trial, that he had insisted upon, or even allowed, the Irishmen to be punished for refusing to follow his exhortations.

Still the recruiting for the Irish Brigade made no progress; and out of some three thousand Irish prisoners only a handful had yet been found who would accept the offer of freedom, if they would enter Casement's service to assert Ireland's claim to choose its own allegiance in a world war.

'We found it very difficult to do any propaganda,' writes the anonymous member of the Irish Brigade in *Land and Water*, 'and couldn't even enter any of the other companies' lines. The Germans never took the slightest interest, and perhaps it was as well. I don't know why,' he continues, 'but those prisoners of war hated Germany and the Germans with a hatred appalling in its thoroughness. When I ventured to point out to some of the men that England was at the bottom of the war, and that the German people were undoubtedly the most peaceable and industrious nation in the world, I was laughed at and called a pro-German, etc. It was impossible to convey to the men any idea of what a German landing in Ireland would mean for our country, and of the great impression which the inauguration of a corps of Irish soldiers, fighting, however, as a distinctive body, would make upon the outside world. Finding that it was useless to attempt any propaganda work, I again wrote to Sir Roger Casement on the last day of March, requesting our removal from camp, as relations with the men had grown very strained, to put it mildly.'

It was an ignominious admission of utter failure, but Casement, after several renewed attempts to obtain a hearing in the camp, during which he spent many days of mournful conversations with their chaplains, accompanying them in their visits to the wounded and the dying in hospital, could only respond to the appeal of his recruits. He prevailed with Meyer at the Foreign Office, and in the first weeks of April, the small group of Irishmen who had left their regiments to

accept service which was obviously going to involve no further responsibility while the war lasted, marched out from the camp amid the jeers and derision of an angry crowd of their former companions, who shouted 'Swine' and 'Bloody Traitors' at them as they watched them pass out to freedom down the Limburg road.

Discarding their khaki garments, and rigged out with civilian clothes for the first time in eight months since the war started, they made their way through the comparative luxury of cheap hotels to Berlin, where they understood that they were to assist Casement in preparing further propaganda to develop his forlorn Brigade. For English-speaking soldiers without uniform to get across Berlin was no easy matter; and it took hours before they arrived on foot by circuitous routes at the Eden Hotel, where Casement had made an appointment to meet them. They found him in bed looking utterly prostrate and exhausted, and suffering much from a chronic sore throat.

His nervous condition was tragically apparent. But he greeted them warmly, and a few days later he had sent for them again. This time Casement was recovered sufficiently to leave his room, and he motored them across Berlin to the Hotel Bristol, where he called to find a young American friend from Chicago on a visit to Berlin, whom he introduced to them as 'Mr. Peters.' They went upstairs to the young man's room, and listened with amazement when they were told that the 'sickly-looking young man' with glasses, wearing a green American suit, was in reality Mr. Joseph Plunkett, who had made his way as an emissary from the Irish Volunteers' Committee in Ireland, to get in touch with Casement and learn how far he had been able to obtain German assistance.

The name conveyed nothing to them, and they had never heard either of the young man's father, Count Plunkett, the Director of the National Museum in Dublin, or of the *Irish Review*, which his son had edited before the war, and in which, under various pseudonyms, Casement had written his articles about Germany and Ireland and the coming war. It was not until a year later – when the dreamy young man, with

his pale, consumptive face, scarred with operations for tuberculosis, sprang into prominence as one of the organisers of the Dublin Rebellion – that they realised how close they had been in that hour in a Berlin hotel to conspiracies which were to change the fate of Ireland. The young man had made his way as an invalid, ostensibly in search of sunny climates, through Spain and Italy and Switzerland to Germany under an assumed name. He stayed on now in Berlin for some time longer, though his visit was never known of, until long afterwards, by the British Secret Service. And one hot morning in early May, when the asphalted streets of Berlin were bubbling with the intense heat, he set out with two of Casement's young lieutenants to make their way to Limburg Camp.

By that time they had obtained the uniforms which Casement had himself designed, of fine grey cloth, with green facings, and harps on the collars, to distinguish them from the German uniforms; and as they arrived at Limburg Camp escorted by Father Nicholson, the prisoners came crowding out of their huts to look with amazement and with fury at the new arrivals. Once again there were shouts of derision, mingled with fierce execrations from the men who had continued to suffer confinement, while the few had bought their freedom by a betrayal. 'We felt as we looked at them,' writes the same narrator, 'that we had a tough job in front of us, and that we took our lives in our own hands when we went into the barracks alone.'

But they faced it with boldness, if without conviction; and then in batches the unfortunate prisoners were marched up through the day to be lectured in the presence of their former companions upon their own folly in being duped by England about the war. The Irish Brigaders in the field-grey uniforms even made speeches themselves, and it was at least reassuring to find that they provoked amusement, after the first shock was over, rather than any ferocity of anger.

'We spoke of many things which should make a man's blood boil,' writes one of them, 'but had we talked to a crowd of Frenchmen, the results would have been more gratifying, I think. The Munster Fusiliers were more loyal than the English

signed by Casement, Monteith, and Bailey,' writes the contributor to *Land and Water*. 'The next news we got was of Casement's capture, and the treachery of Bailey.'

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Casement's health had broken down completely under the long strain of his lonely mission. He was constantly laid up in bed for weeks on end, left more a prey to his memories and to his disappointments than at any period of his life, distrusted on all sides and overwhelmed by a sense of his own futility in having left America on this quixotic enterprise. Day and night he was tormented by horrible dreams, for the memory of tortured Indians in the Putumayo still haunted him.

Only one haven of peace had he found in all his time in Germany, and that was the little prison chapel at Limburg. There the kindly Dominican, Father Crotty, had created a centre of restfulness and of consolation that meant more to Casement, as he thought of it wistfully, than it could mean even to the prisoners in their unending incarceration and enforced idleness. His thoughts turned to religion in those long summer months which he spent with his friend, Dr. Curry, at Riederau; and before he left Limburg he had told Father Crotty often that he wished he, too, could become a Catholic. He had even asked Father Crotty to instruct him with a view to his becoming a Catholic, but the kind chaplain had declined, saying that his action would be misinterpreted. He commended him to other priests instead, if he really sought instruction. And in the summer during those restful months at Riederau, Casement was introduced to one of the German priests at Munich Cathedral, Father Fischer. A real friendship sprang up between them; but events were to develop suddenly that prevented his intentions from going any further.

Casement had been obliged to spend much of his time at Berlin, during the late autumn and early winter, in a desperate effort to obtain better treatment, and secure some sort of military occupation for the melancholy group who had volunteered in

his Irish Brigade, who represented the failure of all his hopes at Limburg.

At the beginning of December¹⁸ he had gone out to stay at Zossen in order to be near them. They were kept practically as prisoners of war, though Monteith was nominally in command of them, and all Casement's efforts failed to persuade the German Government to treat them as a military unit. He even tried vainly to have his fifty men sent out for active service to Syria. Through the autumn and winter he worried the Foreign Office to agree to their going out there. He had obtained the consent of Enver Pasha, and it lay only with the German military chiefs in the East to accept. At last, in the first days of January 1916, he obtained the assurances he required and was promised that his fifty men would be 'at once trained in the use of machine-guns.' But so many promises had been made to him only to be broken, that he had no faith even now in this latest assurance.

Yet another year had dawned and peace seemed more remote than ever, while the frustration of his own hopes was utterly complete. Less than two years ago he had looked forward to war as the sure means of achieving liberty for Ireland. The first months had been still full of promise for his own dreams. Christmas of 1914 had found him a tragically lonely figure in Berlin, but still full of hope; and it was in that very week he had concluded the arrangement under which his Irish Brigade was to be recruited. Even then there had been a miserable foreboding and a sense of inevitable futility. He had already learned to suspect and mistrust the German rulers in whom he had placed such unqualified faith only a few months before.

Failure had developed with awful swiftness in the months that followed; and his second Christmas had been more miserable than the first. 'I wish very much that peace would come,' he wrote to one of his German friends, when that day which should be one of rejoicing all over the world had come and gone; 'it is dreadful to think of all the world beginning a new year with nothing but Death - killing and murdering wholesale, and destroying all that makes life happy.' Now even the uncertain

promise that his forlorn 'Brigade' would be trained at once for service in Syria could not revive his hopes.

Early in February there had come a message which disturbed him fiercely. Von Wedel, at the Foreign Office, who had once been so courteous, so encouraging, sent him a brief letter with an enclosure that he believed might interest him. It was a typewritten copy of Robert Emmet's speech¹⁹ from the dock in Dublin before his execution for high treason after he had led a hopeless insurrection. Who had given it to them in Berlin? Casement asked himself, and what possible reason had they for getting someone to type it out for him? It was like a warning of death sent by his own allies. It was the writing on the wall.

'I had been sick for so long,' he wrote in his diary when he resumed it after many months – 'Sick at heart and soul, with mind and nerves threatening a complete collapse. No man was ever in such a false position. I had no means of communicating with my friends in America. Finally I broke down, and acting on the advice of a great doctor, I went to a "nerve rest" at Munich on 19th January 1916. While there, came the return of my friend Gaffney. He stayed in Berlin, but wrote me often and imperatively begging me to come to Berlin as there was a matter of great importance to discuss with him. I came, arriving on 16th February.'

Gaffney, the Consul-General for the United States in Munich, who was a friend of John Devoy in America, and an ardent politician, had been full of anxiety for his friend, and he had formed a plan which could not be discussed in writing. He had made up his mind that Casement must be got out of Germany. In the United States he would not only be safe from molestation but could hope to do something much more effective for the Irish cause they both had at heart. Gaffney had a cosmopolitan friend called Shirmer, a Norwegian of German descent, who was constantly undertaking missions for the German Foreign Office; and through Shirmer's good offices he believed that Casement could be got away. He was due to leave Berlin a few days after Casement arrived in answer to

his urgent summons; and when Casement came Gaffney proposed that he, too, should travel on the same ship to the United States in a week's time. It was a surprise indeed, and Casement received the invitation with unbounded joy.

But Shirmer was not willing to take the responsibility at once. He promised instead that he would talk to the captain of the Norwegian ship and try to arrange that Casement should travel on the next voyage outwards. Meanwhile there was to be a great Irish demonstration in New York on 4th March, and Gaffney suggested that the opportunity should be seized to convey a message from Casement to the Irish leaders there. He even prevailed upon Casement to hand over the 'Findlay document' – which he had managed to get back from the Foreign Office – for Shirmer to transmit to Judge Cohalan's safe keeping. The arrangement was made, and Casement settled down to waiting in tense expectation until a cable should arrive from Shirmer. They had agreed that if the word 'sold' was included in the telegram, that meant that he had been able to arrange for Casement to travel to America by the same ship when she returned for her next voyage.

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Hope had indeed come back, but what a different hope to that which had inspired him when he had left America eighteen months before! Now it was a mad longing to escape from the false promises, the suspicions and the indignities that had overwhelmed him month after month during the past year. February was all but through, and in the first days of March Shirmer ought to be safe on land in the United States. A cable might be expected any day after that.

Casement stayed on in Berlin till the end of February in wretched ill-health, and then he decided to go back with Gaffney to Munich. The days passed in anxious waiting and still no cable came. The Irish Convention had already been held, and still no word came. Had Shirmer let them down? Had the Findlay letter itself fallen into the enemy's hands? He was half mad with anxiety and suspense when on 6th March

an urgent letter came to him from Monteith at Zossen which conveyed the ominous news that there was a 'move on' concerning which he could not write. Monteith alone of the 'Irish Brigade' was left free in his movements, and he arrived from Zossen on the following day.

How was it²⁰ that Monteith himself should have received important news when Casement had had no word? What he reported showed that even the German General Staff had decided to keep Casement in the dark and to use Monteith instead. They had summoned Monteith to Berlin, and there Lieutenant Frey had informed him that a cable had come to them from John Devoy requesting that rifles and ammunition should be sent to Ireland at once, as 'something' would happen there very shortly of 'great importance.' Frey had been extremely encouraging. He had told Monteith that the German Government was prepared to send two hundred thousand rifles, with ammunition to match, and that they would arrange for their being landed in Ireland at a given date, probably from trawlers. The deliberate ignoring of Casement required some explanation. His own inference was quite simple: that they knew that he would not believe their word. He said bitterly to Monteith: 'They lie always. They may or may not keep faith to-day, but I have no reason to believe that in anything they do they ever think of us, or of others, but only of themselves.'

Nevertheless, it did look as though they intended to do something this time: and Casement, with a great effort at self-control, settled down to discussing with Monteith the best means of procuring as much as could be got. Monteith had heard enough to gather that the 'something' in Ireland was to take place in April, and that it was urgent that the arms should be landed in good time. Devoy had cabled that he was writing details, and his letter was now expected in Berlin any day. Monteith relied upon Casement to advise him as to how he should resume his conversations with the General Staff.

Casement drew up a memorandum for Monteith to bring back to Berlin that night, pointing out that before the shipment of arms was sent to Ireland, it was essential to convey intelligence

to their friends there, so that the landing places might be arranged and other details settled to ensure success. He proposed accordingly, that he himself should be sent on to Ireland in advance to prepare the way. He would go at once in a submarine with two picked soldiers from his Irish Brigade. They ought to be landed by the submarine near Dublin, and the submarine could then stand by while he got a message to send back announcing what had been arranged. Devoy should be informed by cable at the same time whatever might be decided. If they would only act upon his suggestions this time, the whole situation might be saved.

At the very moment when he was waiting for the cable from New York as to whether he could leave Germany by the Norwegian steamer, this sudden development seemed to transform the whole outlook. It might yet convert failure to an overwhelming success. Was his whole mission to end gloriously after all?

Yet still no word came from Shirmer in New York. Casement hurried back to Berlin. There on St. Patrick's Day he was again ill in bed, still waiting for the expected cable, and wondering what would happen next to Monteith's negotiations with the General Staff. He was too ill to conduct them himself. At last the cable arrived, and he could breathe more freely. At least he knew that the Findlay letter had been delivered into safe hands, where it still remains, in the United States. But the great scheme for 'something' due to take place in Ireland was fast maturing.

All must turn on how far the German promises of co-operation would be fulfilled. Casement went to and fro between the War Office and the Foreign Office, and his fears grew rapidly as the days passed. He learned at once that the first promise of two hundred thousand rifles was a wild exaggeration. All that was contemplated was to send one-tenth of that number. Even that, he felt, would be something, if only they would send trained German instructors and officers to organise the insurrectionary forces. But on that point the German War Office would not listen to argument or entreaty. They would

not even send machine-guns; and the promise to train his fifty men at Zossen in machine-gun practice had never been carried out. As for them – now that the time for action was at hand – Casement learned from Monteith that few of them could be trusted. And when Casement prevailed at last upon the War Office to let his Irish Brigaders be taught machine-gun drill, he found that one machine-gun was allowed them. With it, a fraction of his fifty men were practising in a desultory fashion while the days slipped by.

If only he could prevail upon the Admiralty to give him a submarine, so that he could complete the arrangements for landing the rifles, he might at least be able to put the whole truth before the organisers of the Volunteers in Dublin. But on that also they were obstinate as mules.

From the very beginning he had insisted that no enterprise in Ireland could possibly succeed unless Germany was prepared to send a real expedition of troops. Now they would not even send a quota of officers and instructors. Without them he believed that the whole scheme would be worse than useless. It must precipitate a rising in Ireland, which was absolutely certain to be put down with overwhelming bloodshed and destruction. ‘I, traitor of to-day,’ he wrote in the agony of his humiliation, ‘will become the “sacrifice dupe” of to-morrow. . . . The English are quite capable of shutting me up in a lunatic asylum and asking the world what it thinks of the Germans who handled a lunatic thus? And my madness may be pardoned, but the cowardice of those who first took advantage of it and then flung the madman to destruction, when they had no longer any use for him, will echo through the world as a crowning example of “Hun” methods. I go on because I am fool enough, or coward enough, I know not which. . . . This absurd expedition may well be the turning point with a vengeance, of German relations with America. All the Chancellor’s wise efforts to retain friendly relations with America may be brought wholly to ruin by this half-thought-out scheme of soldiers who know as much about Ireland as they do about America. Our chances of escaping

capture are daily diminishing, and to be captured may be the way out.'

It had come to that. Only in his own capture and disgrace did he now see any hope of salvation for the people whom he had once hoped to lead in insurrection. With a bitter heart, he assisted in completing the final arrangements. Monteith and he and Bailey – the one member of his Irish Brigade whom they both believed to be most trustworthy, and who was to turn King's evidence against him as soon as they landed – were all to change their clothes at the General Staff on Saturday afternoon, and then go down to the station disguised as sailors under the charge of a naval officer.

Then hope revived suddenly for a day, when word came from von Wedel at the Foreign Office transmitting to Casement immediately an anonymous message that had arrived from the agent of the Irish revolutionary committee in Switzerland. It was dated from Berne, 5th April:

'Ashling. (Secret.)

'Dear Roger Casement,

'I am requested, as the delegate sent by the President and Supreme Council of the Irish Volunteer Army, and am able – through the courtesy of His Excellency the German Ambassador – to give you, this urgent message from Ireland:

'(1) The Insurrection is fixed for the evening of next Easter Sunday.

'(2) The large consignment of arms to be brought into Tralee Bay must arrive there not later than the dawn of Easter Saturday.

'(3) German officers will be necessary for the Irish Volunteer Forces. This is imperative.

'(4) A German submarine will be required in Dublin Harbour.

'The time is very short, but is necessarily so; for we must act of our own choice, and delays are dangerous.

'Yours very sincerely,

'A FRIEND OF JAMES MALCOLM.'

Casement rushed to the Admiralty at once to renew more urgently than ever his entreaty that he might be allowed to travel ahead by submarine to give warning of what was intended. He saw von Heydell, who returned after a few minutes' consultation with a blank refusal. Was it sheer undiluted stupidity? Or was it indeed a genuine fear on the German side that Casement might after all be a British spy, attempting to convey a message to London under this reckless parade of devotion to his cause? 'I don't know but that Heydell thought me probably mad,' he wrote that night in his diary. 'I was for the moment, and utterly angry when I thought of Ireland, of those poor boys on Easter Sunday and Easter Monday waiting for the steamer, the rising already accomplished, and their only hope the ship with the rifles and the officers who will not be there.'

He felt like a caged beast; and at the very moment when he might have been so jubilantly looking forward to embarking on a glorious episode, his one thought was to send warning at all costs to the Irish people that they had been betrayed, and that the arms which were being shipped to them would be their undoing.

He had insisted absolutely that he would not agree to having his 'Irish Brigade' sent on the transport ship. He would risk and sacrifice his own life, but not theirs. And while he urged upon the Germans the indispensable necessity of sending word in advance to Ireland, so that arrangements should be made to meet the transport ship, his one longing was to convey a message by any means which would call off the rising.

There was still one remote possibility of getting a confidential messenger to Ireland before he left himself. An Irish-American named John McGoeys had been in Germany for some months, sent out by John Devoy to assist Casement there; and to him Casement confided his own desperate anxiety and the need to get word through to Dublin. The proposed German intervention was so utterly inadequate, that McGoeys was easily won to Casement's view. But to obtain the cargo, such as it was, and to call off the rising without arousing the Germans' suspicions, would require most skilful management and tact. McGoeys

agreed to play his part in hoodwinking them, and in response to his apparent enthusiasm for the project, the Foreign Office and the military authorities agreed to allow him to leave Germany at once for Denmark, to make his way by any means he could to Scotland.

McGoey left immediately without risking any change of mind on the part of the authorities, and Casement's spirits rose as he knew that he had departed on his journey. The chance of his reaching Ireland in time was remote enough, but at least he had gone to try. 'He goes as an added string to our bow,' Casement wrote, 'to tell the Dublin Council to have the pilot boat at Inishtooskert, etc.; but he goes really to try and get the heads in Ireland to call off the "Rising."' It was well that he had started at once, for the Admiralty were furious when they heard of his departure.

They sent for Casement, and accused him flatly of breach of faith. Their worst suspicions had been aroused, and his failure to consult them confirmed their old fears that he was really a British spy. They asked him again and again if he had sent McGoey to stop the rising in Ireland, and Casement in an outburst of unguarded temper, laughed in their faces and told them straight that both McGoey and himself were strongly opposed to any rising.

There was no man in whom he could confide, but in despair he turned to a secret agent of the Foreign Office, named Noegerrath, with whom he had made friends, to whom he revealed all his fears. They dined together that night, and Casement told him of his own absolute conviction that the ship with the rifles would be seized before it could land. He was even praying that it might; and if he himself were on board, his capture might yet be a signal to the Irish Volunteers that there was no use in going on. The British Government would announce the capture immediately, and would be delighted to publish the fact that he had been caught on board the ship. That alone seemed to offer any hope, and the rising would then be stopped. 'Knowing that the steamer is in the enemy's hands,' he wrote, 'and no relief can come, they will never go on with it.'

So I pray God in His mercy for this solution to save the situation in Ireland, and to save our young people from being made the victims of this callous conspiracy.'

The weeks of nerve-racking interviews in Berlin had reduced him to a state of supreme despair. He had no illusions left. He saw in the German offer of one cargo of rifles no more than a shameful pretence at fulfilling the promises that had been made so often to John Devoy and to the Irish-Americans. They would be able to say that when Devoy appealed to them for assistance they had done their best. With Casement prevented from ever letting the truth be known, and debarred from any communication whatever with his friends either in Ireland or in America, there would be no revelation of how they had betrayed their promises to him. He saw in the whole plan no more than a sordid attempt to evade responsibilities that could not be fulfilled without paying a much heavier price. Ireland was to be sacrificed indeed, but the Irish-Americans were to be led to believe that Germany had done her best as a gallant ally.



The days were fast running out, and in his despair Casement thought wildly of every friend whom he could possibly invoke. It was many months since he had seen Blücher; he and his wife believed that Casement was still in a nursing home in Munich. His friend Dr. Curry was in Munich, and to him Casement had left all the private papers that he cherished; but there was nothing that Curry could do now to help him. Blücher could not be expected to use any influence against the Government, when Casement was on the eve of departing for so mad a journey. Yet he longed for some friend to whom he could confide his anguish of mind. In his frantic loneliness he telephoned to the Blüchers' hotel, and he was answered by Countess Blücher. She had been attracted by his ardent sincerity, and they had become friends. She has left in her own published diary of the war for 4th April an account of the conversation and the meeting that took place.

'I was suddenly rung up on the telephone by Sir Roger Case-

ment, saying he must see me at once. I was somewhat surprised as I thought he was ill in bed at Munich. It was a few days ago when we heard of him last. However, although I was not keen on seeing him, I telephoned back to say that I would do so for a few minutes. Little did I think what a scene was before me. The poor man came into the room like one demented, talked in a husky whisper, rushed round examining all the doors, and then said, "I have something to say to you. Are you sure no one is listening?"

'For a moment I was frightened. I felt I was in the presence of a madman, and worked my way round to sit near the telephone so as to be able to call for help. And then he began: "You were right a year ago when you told me that I had put my head in a noose in coming here. I have tried not to own you were right, and I did not like to tell you, when you kept on urging me to get out of the country, that I realised from the moment I landed that in reality I was a prisoner here. I could not get away. They will not let me out of the country. The German Foreign Office have had me shadowed, believing I was a spy in the pay of England, and England has had men spying on me all the time as well. Now the German Admiralty have asked me to go on an errand which all my being revolts against, and I am going mad at the thought of it, for it will make me appear as a traitor to the Irish cause."

'And at these words he sat down and sobbed like a child. I saw the man was beside himself with terror and grief, and so I tried to get a few more definite facts out of him, and told him there is a way out of every difficulty if he would only tell me more. But he said, "If I told you more it would endanger the lives of many, and as it is, it is only my life that has to be sacrificed." I made all sorts of suggestions, but all he would say was, "They are holding a pistol to my head here if I refuse, and they have a hangman's rope ready for me in England: and so the only thing for me to do is to go out and kill myself."

'I argued him out of this, and at last he went away after giving me a bundle of farewell letters to be opened after his death. As he went out of the door he said, "Tell them I was

loyal to Ireland, although it will not appear so." He asked to see me again, but as I am watched like every one else here, and as there was evidently some political intrigue on, I had to refuse.'

There was another friend also, but he was far away, and what hope could there be of calling him from his duties in a military camp? More than anyone else, in all his time in Germany, Father Crotty, the chaplain to the prison camp at Limburg, had won Casement's affection and his confidence. If he could only talk to him it would steady his nerves and give him courage. But how could a prison chaplain with only a military passport be brought to Berlin for no apparent reason at a moment's notice? Casement knew that if human ingenuity could overcome the difficulties of reaching Berlin, Father Crotty would be with him before he started. It was asking for the impossible; but in his anguish Casement telegraphed to Limburg to fetch him, scarcely hoping that he would ever see his friend again.

In the prison camp the Irish Dominican priest received with amazement the urgent message dated from Berlin which told him to come at once. He had known that Casement had been ill for months in Munich, and the address of this urgent summons filled him with wonder. That Casement was dying in a Berlin hospital was the immediate inference that occurred to him; and it dawned on him – as the memory of those days together in the prison camp flashed back on his mind – that perhaps Casement desired to become a Catholic before he died. They had prayed so often together in the little wooden chapel among the prisoners; and Casement had said to him again and again how he wished that he shared the simple faith of those indomitable soldiers, who had preferred to remain in their prison without hope of liberation rather than listen to his own appeals. This urgent summons from Berlin looked as though it could have no other meaning.

Father Crotty's hands were full with work among his prisoners, and he had not even a military pass that would enable him to travel to Berlin. If he should be stopped, it might easily mean the cancellation of his passport and the termination

of his appointment as a prison chaplain for neglect of duty. He knew well that the Government had no sympathy with Casement, and that the pretext of leaving his prisoners in order to assist at Casement's death-bed, would certainly meet with a cold reception. But the friendship that had sprung up between them was such that Father Crotty faced all risks without hesitation.

Travelling by the first possible train to Berlin, without any military or other permit, Father Crotty went straight to Casement's hotel, wondering anxiously whether he had arrived in time. He had brought with him the few things that would be necessary to receive Casement into the Catholic Church, and as he reflected over his errand in the railway train, he wished that Casement could have found it possible to entrust the ceremony to other hands. He was the chaplain of a prison camp where attempts had notoriously been made to seduce the allegiance of Irish prisoners of war; and it was distinctly embarrassing to be identified, even in that strictly religious way, with Casement at the hour of his death. But the entreaties of a dying man were more important than any consideration of expediency.

It was an overwhelming surprise to find when he reached his destination in all haste, that Casement was not only out of bed, but out of the hotel and on important business. He could only wait in bewilderment until the hotel door was opened suddenly, and an amazing and most distressing sight confronted him. The tall, dignified man was tragically changed since they last met. Casement's face was haggard and distraught, and he moved like a haunted man. His voice choked with emotion, and his eyes filled with tears, as he grasped Father Crotty's hand and thanked him for coming, while he murmured broken-heartedly that 'we are ruined.'

Father Crotty could not even guess what it all meant; and then Casement explained in rapid broken sentences that a rebellion was to take place in Ireland within a few weeks, and that he had been deprived of all means of communicating with Ireland to implore them to desist from the attempt. He had searched everywhere for a messenger who could bring his warning. There was no hope of getting any word through to Ireland;

and since he had telegraphed to Father Crotty he had thought of a last plan in desperation. He had stooped to the last ignominy of humiliation.

He had prevailed upon two Irish-Americans whom he knew in Berlin to go straight to London with a message from himself to Asquith and Sir Edward Grey. They had agreed, after infinite persuasion, to do as he asked. He had told them that it was the only means of saving Ireland from a tragedy that would involve untold bloodshed and the defeat of all their hopes for generations to come. Germany had betrayed him, and was about to betray the Irish people, in a miserable effort to evade its commitments to the Irish-Americans, by sending a wretched cargo of rifles which would be utterly useless for military purposes, and would only be an incitement to a rebellion that could not conceivably succeed.

Father Crotty listened with amazement to the incredible story. He had expected to receive a dying man into the Catholic Church. Instead he found Casement behaving like a madman, beside himself with grief and disillusionment. He had actually committed the very act of treachery which the Germans had always suspected that he might perpetrate. He had led them to the point of preparing an expedition to Ireland; and now at the last moment, when he was himself getting ready to embark on the German ship with its cargo of rifles, he had indeed dispatched that last fatal message to Asquith and to Edward Grey which was to catch the Germans in the trap they had always feared. Yet no one except the chaplain to the Irish prisoners, who had withstood all his efforts at seducing them, was to know what he had actually done!

Was there anything that this incredible, quixotic adventurer would not do, when his tortured conscience urged him to mad actions? He had sacrificed his whole future long ago by treason against the British Government. He had striven for two years to expose the machinations of British diplomacy against himself. And now at the last moment, when the purpose of his mission to Germany was apparently on the eve of fulfilment, he was humbling himself in the dust and writing a letter of entreaty

even to Edward Grey – whose very name he had come to loathe because of the Findlay affair – imploring him to save the Irish people from the peril that been brought about by his own activities in Germany.

It was useless to argue. Father Crotty could only wait and do all in his power to pacify Casement in the disordered state of his mind. The long hours dragged on and Casement was writing in his diary the bitter thoughts that surged uncontrollably through his brain. And then towards midnight an unexpected knock came at his door. The two Irish-Americans who had promised to carry his letters to London for Asquith and Grey had returned, when he was still counting the hours till they would have arrived in London.

Father Crotty was still with him, and a look of unspeakable anguish crossed Casement's face. His last hope had gone, and they had no excuse to offer. They had changed their minds and come back. They still believed that while the war lasted a blow must be struck in Ireland; and if this German expedition were to be frustrated all hope of another German intervention while the war lasted would be gone for ever.

'To-morrow is the last day,' Casement wrote in the early morning of 7th April, when he had awakened from a sleep of utter exhaustion. 'To-day there will be a last fight for the submarine. I know it is futile. To-day is really my last day, and I shall be hunted and driven all day, but it is still early. I told that faithful, splendid Monteith last night that I should be glad to go even to death on the scaffold of an English jail, to get away from Germany and these people I despise so much. If my papers survive, and above all the treaty, it will be shown that I was only a fool that trusted German honour – and never a rogue.'

Then the last day of agonised effort began in earnest. Five times he presented himself during the day at the General Staff headquarters, demanding a submarine in which he might go ahead to prepare the Irish revolutionaries for what was about to happen. He had only succeeded at first in obtaining permission to dispatch a telegram to Berne announcing that the

steamer and its cargo were being sent, but that no German officers or men would go with it, and that no submarine was being sent. Even that concession gave some faint glimmer of hope that a message might yet get through to Ireland from Switzerland. All he could do was to write a long letter to the Irish envoy, which Haugwitz promised to send on by a special courier that would leave for Berne that night. But would they send it?

Backwards and forwards, from the General Staff to the Admiralty, he spent the day in fierce endeavours to get the submarine from one or other. His importunity was unceasing. He was back at his hotel at midday, when a message came to him from the Admiralty telling him to call again in the afternoon. He arrived and was left in company with a young corvetten captain, waiting interminably until the door opened suddenly.

Heydell burst in, in great excitement. The Admiralty had been holding a full-dress discussion on the whole business, and they had agreed at last that Casement should be allowed to go ahead by submarine. Casement's one anxiety was that he should be certain to arrive in good time; and they promised that they would not let him down.

He returned to his hotel exhausted, but with hope reviving. There was still a chance that he would arrive in time to give his warning. It meant a further postponement of his departure for one day at least; but he had Monteith and Bailey both with him at his hotel, and they were to receive their final instructions from the Admiralty at one o'clock next day. He was not allowed even to know who was the Irish envoy at Berne who had sent that urgent message signed 'A Friend of James Malcolm.' It might possibly be Joseph Plunkett, but he thought not. The handwriting was familiar, but he was unable to identify it for certain. 'Were these people inspired by any decency,' he wrote bitterly, 'they would have brought him here or permitted me to communicate frankly with him. They clearly want me not to see him and I do not know what to do. I am powerless in their hands. They carefully keep us apart at this crisis in our

country's affairs. It is doubtful if he will be told anything sure at all, and if he is told, I shall have gone away to Erin.'

The last night came; and in the morning, while they waited, Casement's friend, the secret service agent, Noegerrath, telephoned to say that he wanted to come round and say good-bye. They parted, and then Casement and his two companions went round to the Admiralty for their last instructions. Once more they were to be disappointed. No orders had yet arrived, but Heydell had gone down to Wilhelmshafen to conclude arrangements about the submarine. They returned again at three, and while Casement settled down to wait despairingly on Captain Stoetzel's sofa, the telephone message came through.

At last it was really settled. The U-boat was to be ready for Casement at Emden on 12th April. On Monday the 10th he was to come back again to receive the final orders from Heydell at the Admiralty. Not until the night of 11th April were they to leave Berlin for Emden; and the rising was due to take place in Ireland on the 23rd.

PART V

THE TRAITOR'S GATE

'If, as the right honourable gentleman, the present Attorney-General, asserted in a speech at Manchester, Nationalists would neither fight for Home Rule nor pay for it, it was our duty to show him that we knew how to do both. . . . The difference between us was that the Unionist champions chose a path they felt would lead to the Woolsack; while I went a road that I knew must lead to the dock. And the event proves both were right.' — From Roger Casement's speech from the dock.

'The prisoner, blinded by a hatred to this country, as malignant in quality as it was sudden in origin, has played a desperate hazard. He has played it and he has lost it. To-day the forfeit is claimed.' — SIR F. E. SMITH, K.C., Attorney-General, in opening the prosecution of Roger Casement.

THE TRAITOR'S GATE

THE sea was rough, with a strong swell rolling inland from the Atlantic on the evening of Thursday, 20th April. It had been dark for some hours when a labourer living at Curraghane, some eight miles from Tralee, along the sandy coast on the north side of Tralee Bay, came out from a friend's house to return to his own cottage about half-past nine. The booming of the sea filled the air, and a strong wind was blowing towards the shore.

He walked along the rough road; and as he looked through the darkness towards the Atlantic, he noticed a curious red light out in the bay. It appeared suddenly in the night, and then in a few seconds disappeared. The light had been fairly close inland, barely half a mile away. He stopped to see if it appeared again, and he waited for some time, but no further sign was to be seen. Only the booming of the rollers pounding on the banks of sand continued; and there was no sign of any ship out in the harbour. Something mysterious was out there in the darkness; but he went home to bed, and decided that he would go to the same part of the shore next morning, which would be Good Friday, to see if he could find any trace of a solution of the mystery.

In that wild Kerry coast, screened from the rest of Ireland by the mountains that spread southwards around Killarney, and surrounded by innumerable little creeks and harbours, there have been smugglers since time immemorial. It was far remote from the war in Europe, and only the soaring price of eggs and of the sparse crops that could be grown on the barren mountain slopes, had made any marked difference to the primitive life of the countryside. Arms had been landed in small quantities at different times; and during the past year there had

been many mysterious stories flying about, of German submarines appearing above the surface, and, it was said, obtaining petrol and other supplies from secret depots in the numerous islands along the coast. But the mystery that has always brooded over those Kerry mountains was impenetrable; and the secrecy of the peasantry among the mountains, with their queer old superstitions and their belief in fairies which still survives, creates a sense of permanent expectancy in which anything unusual may happen at any time without any explanation being available or desired.

A few hours later the same night, a farmer named John McCarthy was moved by a strange impulse to rise from his bed at two in the morning; and as it was now Good Friday, he walked out along the shore – as he had never done in his life before on such an occasion – for about a mile to visit a holy well where he wished to say some prayers. There was no one else about in the darkness, and he did not even hear any unusual sound. He went on to the well and prayed there for some time, and it was about four when he returned towards his house. He noticed that the tide was coming in as he walked along. It was not yet daylight, but the sky was lightening fast in the sunrise of a spring morning; and as he looked across the green sea he saw a most unfamiliar object being carried in on the splashing waves.

A strange-looking rowing-boat, flat-bottomed, was drifting in, and its four oars were floating on the water near it. He went down to inspect and gathered up the oars and attempted to draw the boat also on to higher ground. But it was too heavy for one man to handle; and he could only leave it there, after he had been occupied for the best part of an hour in retrieving the oars and trying to haul in the boat. By that time it was broad daylight, and when he went back to his little house to report the strange discovery he had made, he roused his small son and sent him off at once to a neighbour's house to fetch Pat Driscoll, so that they might both drag the boat on to the shore together.

He went back to the shore again in some excitement, and was soon joined by his neighbour, and they tugged hard to drag

the boat in, but it was so full of water that its weight was more than their united efforts could manage. They waited for the tide to turn; and after a time, by baling out the water, they were able to beach the boat. It was such an unusual-looking craft that they were scarcely surprised when they discovered a dagger in it. Close at hand, partly covered with earth and by the sand that had been washed in by the tide, they also found a tin box that was corded up. But they did not dare to open it yet; for it was evident that the police would have to come on the scene and conduct an inquiry. Clear traces of footprints on the sand had plainly been made by three men landing during the night, and left no doubt that whoever had come in the boat had got away. The footprints showed that the men had made off in the direction of McCarthy's house, but they were lost to sight beyond the edge of the sand, and there was no trace of where the men had gone.

When McCarthy and Driscoll returned together from the boat, they were horrified to find McCarthy's little daughter was playing with three revolvers she had picked up. Looking round further to discover anything else that might have been washed ashore, they found a 'sort of bag' near by. McCarthy took possession of all that had been found and he sent Driscoll on to the barracks at Ardfert to inform the police.

They rise early along that Kerry coast; and at another house close by the old 'castle,' or prehistoric ruin, that is called Rathoneen, the maid-servant, Mary Gorman, was at work as usual by four. She had been up and about for half an hour, when she had happened to be looking towards the gate of her employer's house, and she noticed three strange men walking quickly from the sea in the direction of Ardfert. It was light enough for her to see them clearly, and she noticed that one of them was extremely tall, another was also a big man, and the third was small. The tall man, she could see, was carrying a knapsack across his shoulders, and he had a walking-stick and an overcoat. The other two also had overcoats. The tall man had a black beard, and was a man whom you would not fail to recognise. She had gone on with her work, but she was to find

later in the day that what she had seen was a matter that concerned the police at Ardfert barracks.

The chief constable, Sergeant Hearn, had received the astonishing message Driscoll conveyed to him from John McCarthy, and gone down with another constable on bicycles to Curraghane, where a crowd was already gathered around the boat. They pulled it up well out of reach of the sea, and McCarthy handed over to his custody the three revolvers and the dagger. Before long the policemen had made more discoveries. There were three discarded life-belts, and a brown handbag, as well as a large black bag. The contents of the bags were certainly suspicious. The tin box when opened was found to contain nine hundred rounds of revolver ammunition, and the bags contained maps and a flash-lamp. The boat itself was flat-bottomed, with air tanks about eleven feet long on either side.

Whoever had come by the boat must certainly be law-breakers, so the sergeant went back to the police station to collect his carbine. The junior constable brought his carbine also, and with loaded arms they set out on their search for the missing men. The morning had been spent in these investigations, and it was after one when their search brought them to one of the prehistoric ruins, generally attributed to the Danes, which is known as McKenna's Fort. It was a circular stone ruin surrounded by a deep trench, and inside it was thickly covered with brushwood. The sergeant and the constable with their loaded rifles worked their way cautiously round, and presently Constable Riley caught sight of the head and shoulders of a bearded man peering over the undergrowth inside the fort. He was looking in another direction, and the constable advanced towards him. He turned, and Riley immediately covered him with his rifle, threatening to shoot him if he moved a foot.

'That's a nice way to treat an English visitor,' was the answer, as the stranger raised himself to his full height and protested that he was unarmed and had no hostile intentions. The sergeant then came upon the scene, and asked him what he was doing there. The stranger demanded by what authority he

was asked any question, and was curtly told that if he did not answer every question that was put to him, he would be arrested at once under the Defence of the Realm Regulations. His name, he then informed the policeman, was Richard Morton, and he explained that he was an English author who lived at Denham in Buckinghamshire. It was, in fact, the name of a farmer in whose house Casement had been staying when he received Sir Edward Grey's intimation that he was to receive his knighthood for his services in the Putumayo inquiry.

The sergeant asked him suspiciously to give the name of any book he had ever written, and he replied that he was the author of a life of St. Brendan, the navigator. He had arrived from Dublin, he explained, and had come to see the fort where he now was, having visited Mount Brandon in Kerry.

'I noticed,' the sergeant stated in evidence afterwards at the trial in London, 'that the lower portion of his pants was wet, and that there was sea-sand on his boots.' That had decided him to place the stranger under arrest; and Casement was marched on towards Ardfert until the sergeant found a boy driving a pony trap, whom he ordered to take the constable and the stranger on to Mary Gorman's house, where she was to give evidence as to whether he was the same tall man she had seen from the window early in the morning.

A search of Casement's clothes revealed that he had five sovereigns and eleven shillings in English money. The only incriminating evidence the sergeant discovered was in the bags, which contained the flags and revolver ammunition and a number of maps. Constable Riley produced the most serious evidence, in the shape of two typewritten sheets of paper which were given to him by the boy with the pony and trap, who had seen Casement drop them behind his back as he walked out from the Fort with the two policemen. The papers contained a series of numbers in a foreign script, beside each of which was written a phrase that indicated a code. The phrases were certainly incriminating: 'await further instructions'; 'proposal accepted'; 'communication again possible'; 'our men are at'; 'further ammunition needed'; 'will send plan about landing on'; 'send

more explosives to'; 'send another ship to'; and a great number of similar instructions in code.

That discovery had left no doubt whatever as to where Casement had come from, and there were other papers which gave an address in Switzerland. He was brought down to the barracks in Tralee to remain there in custody, and on the following day, the Saturday before Easter, he was taken by train to Dublin under police escort.

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Casement had been completely in the dark as to what was happening since he had left Germany. Even when they landed from the submarine it was thought advisable that he should separate from his companions, as he would attract too much attention in Tralee. Monteith and Bailey had gone on together while he sheltered in the Fort where he was found by the police, waiting anxiously for their return. There had been no means even of sending word from Germany to Ireland that he was travelling in advance. The steamer with the rifles was expected, but no submarine. Only at the last moment had he succeeded in persuading the Admiralty to send him in U-boat 20, and they had set out from Wilhelmshafen on the 12th knowing that if they even succeeded in escaping the British warships, they would have to arrive without any notification to their friends.

There had been one more maddening disappointment²¹ even after they started. The submarine had developed engine trouble and had been forced to return to Heligoland, where Casement and his companions had to wait for another submarine to take them on. One more precious day had been lost; and it had taken days of travelling to cover the long voyage up the North Sea and round the northern coast of Scotland, to reach the Kerry coast by way of the Shetland Islands. Even the submarine commander had not known that, at the very time when they sighted the Kerry coast at last, they were in close proximity to the steamer *Aud* with its cargo of rifles and ammunition.

He had steamed in as close to land as he safely could, and in the rough sea on that wild night, the submarine had hove to and

lowered the collapsible boat in which Casement and his friends were to take their chances of getting ashore. They had rowed hard on through the darkness, and when they came in among the surf the boat had overturned. They had been thrown out, but they were close enough to the shore to wade in through the pounding waves. And then they had parted company, while Monteith and Bailey went on by road to Tralee.

It was eight o'clock when they reached the town; people were on their way to church that Good Friday morning. Monteith knew the locality and he had looked anxiously round, saying little or nothing to Bailey as they walked. Then he saw a little newsagent's shop in a narrow street where one of the Sinn Féin papers was displayed. That had given him all the indication he wanted. The two men had gone in and waited while the owner of the shop went out to fetch Austin Stack – the commander of the local Volunteers, and one of the chief men in the movement. He had been warned to expect the steamer with its cargo of rifles which had not yet come; but the news of Roger Casement's arrival – he was to be known as 'Mr. Rice' after they had landed – was a complete surprise.

Stack brought other leaders of the Volunteers with him, and a car, in which they set out searching for McKenna's Fort where Casement was waiting for them. But they saw the police there when they approached, and they had to turn back. By then the police were all aroused, and the car had been searched; but Monteith had got away afterwards, leaving Bailey to spend the night in a friendly house. Next day Bailey had been called for again and told to wait for further instructions at a certain place, and he had been waiting there when the police arrived and arrested him. Within half an hour he had told the whole story to the police, and had betrayed his companions in return for a promise that he should go unpunished.

All had been confusion, yet Casement could feel that he had by a miracle achieved his purpose. His own arrest would be made public by the afternoon in Dublin; and that day a Dublin paper did in fact publish not only the news of Casement's arrival and arrest but the fact that he had given a statement to a priest

in Tralee imploring the Volunteers to cancel all plans for an insurrection. It was the first public intimation²² that any rising was even contemplated.

It had been known for weeks that the Volunteers had arranged a general mobilisation for Easter Sunday; but that had been believed to be no more than one of the usual parades, with the special object of demonstrating against the enforcement of conscription in Ireland. That a German ship was on its way to Ireland with a cargo of arms was beyond the wildest imagination of anybody except the innermost circle of the Volunteers Committee. Even John McNeill, the 'chief of staff' of the movement, had received no intimation of it; and he had only become vaguely suspicious on Wednesday, when he had heard definite rumours that the mobilisation orders which he had issued were to be made the occasion for a rebellion. From his own estimate of the probabilities in Ireland, he was fully convinced that any attempt at insurrection by the Volunteers with the object of obtaining political independence while the war lasted was incapable of success. He did not yet know that even Roger Casement – whose own views were much more adventurous than his – had arrived at the same conclusion as a result of his own bitter disappointment with the attitude of the German Government.

But McNeill's position, as 'chief of staff' to the Volunteer movement that he and Casement and Colonel Moore had created, had long ceased to correspond to the realities. An inner group of Fenians, acting within the scope of their own secret society, in direct touch with John Devoy in America, and with the old Fenian, Thomas Clarke, in Dublin as their chief in Ireland, had been secretly preparing for the rebellion that McNeill now discovered to be on the very eve of its accomplishment. Neither McNeill nor Casement were members of the I.R.B. nor enjoyed the real confidence of any of its leaders.

That small and determined junta had completed their own plans at the very outset of the war. Before Casement had ever left America for Germany, in October 1914, on the errand which was his own idea, they had come to their own decisions,

and they had been deliberately and with great energy completing preparations. Two of the few surviving members of the executive committee of the I.R.B. in those days have left on record their own scornful impressions of the ignorance which prevailed concerning their own plans.

'There exists a curious idea in England to this day,' writes Mr. Pierce Beazley, in his *Life of Michael Collins*, 'that Mr. Asquith and Mr. Birrell were in some mysterious way responsible by their "tolerance" of the Irish Volunteers for the Insurrection of Easter Week. As one of those who were working tooth and nail to bring about an insurrection, I can testify that the biggest obstacle that we had to contend against was the cleverness of Birrell's policy. The one thing that would have rallied support to our side was drastic coercion on the part of the British Government; but Mr. Birrell cleverly contrived to appear as not interfering with us, while taking care that we were effectually silenced. . . . Those who were united in standing for Irish interests against English interests, who tried to prevent the Irish people from being carried off their feet by the bellicose oratory of the Irish Parliamentary Party, had to contend not merely against the English Government, but all the most powerful influences in the country - politicians, Press, and to a considerable extent, the clergy. Our position was misrepresented; we were labelled "pro-Germans": it was commonly asserted that we were "paid by German gold." It can be stated here that all the work of the Insurrection was financed by the Clan na Gael and the I.R.B., and that no money was received or sought by us for any branch of the work, save from an Irish source.'

While these secret preparations had been proceeding within a narrow group of the Volunteer Committee since the beginning of December 1914, special care had been taken at every step that neither McNeill nor Casement nor any member of the movement who was not an oath-bound member of the secret society should know what was in preparation. There was one man in the movement who was viewed with particular suspicion both because of his position as general secretary of the

Volunteers under McNeill and especially because of his ability as an organiser and as a politician. Bulmer Hobson – who had been Casement's closest friend in Sinn Féin since 1903, and who was an Ulster Protestant like Casement himself – was outside the secret ring, and he was well known to be strongly hostile to any open attempt at insurrection. His programme was the same as Casement's – that the Volunteers should persevere with their military training while the war lasted; and that they should obtain arms by every possible means, including help from Germany.

Not until the favourable opportunity arose, whether it were during the war or after it, should they assert their determination to obtain political independence, in a much fuller sense than any Home Rule Bill that had yet been introduced, under the threat of making government impossible in Ireland until the demands of the Volunteers were conceded. To achieve that result might require years of preparation, though the arrival of arms would hasten the process immensely. But any attempt at insurrection for its own sake was to be sternly discountenanced.

The conflict between that reasoned view and the fierce, fanatical hatred of England which inspired the I.R.B. was irreconcilable. Their orders in the last resort were dictated by John Devoy in America. And what influence at any given moment might be responsible for deciding the opinion of that hoary Fenian was beyond the knowledge of anyone either in Ireland or in America.

In Dublin, however, much rested with the leaders of the I.R.B. Committee on the spot, and they were dominated, as the war progressed, by two men above all others. One was Patrick Pearse – the visionary schoolmaster with extraordinary powers as a platform speaker and very remarkable gifts as a journalist. A colossal egoism was perhaps the leading feature of Pearse's otherwise attractive character. He had dreamed, until his dreams had become more real to him than anything that could conceivably happen in actual life, that the day was to come when he himself was to lead a rebellion in Dublin in the tradition of Robert Emmet's rising in 1802. He had

rehearsed his own speech from the dock – which was never to be delivered, in the end – until he scarcely thought of anything else. And underlying his whole dream of self-immolation as an Irish patriot, there was a strangely morbid notion that the sacrifice of life for a great cause would alone bring it to new life and vigour.

With Pearse there was another dominating personality in the councils of the revolutionaries whose vision was even more completely obscured by the thought of bloodshed than Pearse's own. James Connolly, the leader of the Irish Labour movement, was a disciple of Karl Marx, who had imbibed the principles of revolutionary socialism to an extent that made him as ruthless as the original Bolshevik leaders in Russia. His one remedy for all Ireland's evils was the shedding of blood – not that he was in the least degree brutal by temperament, but because he had been taught by his political prophets, and because he had become utterly convinced beyond all possibility of argument or contradiction in his own mind, that without bloodshed no progress could ever be made towards revolutionary reforms. Blood-shedding, he held – no matter on what scale, whether large or small – was the infallible means of breeding the revolutionary spirit.

To Casement, in his long absence from Ireland during his mission to Germany, the dominating influence of these factors in the councils of the Volunteer movement was still unknown. He still believed that McNeill retained the reality of leadership as well as the title of leader of the Volunteers. His confidence was all the greater because Bulmer Hobson was its chief organiser. And as he spent that night in the small police barracks in Tralee, in ignorance of what had happened to the companions of his journey in the submarine, he never dreamed for a moment that McNeill and Hobson had both become thoroughly alarmed by the signs of secret preparation that had suddenly confronted them in Dublin. Still less had he any notion that Bulmer Hobson had on that very day been kidnapped by the leaders of the I.R.B. in Dublin, and deprived of any voice whatever in the developments that were now taking place.

What he did believe was that his own arrest would have been made known in time to convince the Volunteers that any attempt at insurrection would be madness. Monteith, he could hope, was already on his way to Dublin to warn the executive committee with a personal message from himself. And, if luck had not failed them altogether, he could hope that the *Aud* had already arrived at its destination on the Kerry coast, and that its cargo had been safely transhipped and distributed throughout the country by the Volunteers, with the same efficiency and dispatch that the Ulster Covenanters had shown at Larne two years before.

On Saturday he was conveyed by train from Tralee to Dublin under a police escort, and he had already admitted his identity. The police in Tralee had granted his wish to be allowed to speak privately on religious matters to one of the Dominican Fathers in the town. Father Ryan, O.P., came in answer to the summons, and Casement revealed his identity to him. After a short conversation on spiritual matters, he made known to him the real purpose of his interview. 'I want you to tell the Volunteers in the town and elsewhere,' he pleaded, 'to keep perfectly quiet. Tell them I am a prisoner and that the rebellion will be a dismal, hopeless failure, as the help they expect will not arrive.' Father Ryan protested that he had been summoned solely in his position as a priest, and that he could not become a political ambassador, but Casement pleaded with him, saying: 'Do what I ask you and you will bring God's blessing on the country and on every one concerned.'

So at least the local correspondent of the *Dublin Evening Mail* – who could scarcely have invented the story at such short notice – reported by telegram to his newspaper. He added that Father Ryan had insisted upon time to think the matter over, and had decided 'after deep and mature reflection that it would be the best thing, not alone for the police but also for the Volunteers and the country, that I should convey the message to the Volunteers and thereby be the means through which bloodshed and suffering might be avoided. I saw the

leader of the Volunteers in Tralee and gave him the message, and he informed the head constable of the steps he had taken and of his reasons for so doing.'

How far that incident was correctly reported must remain a matter of conjecture. The *Evening Mail* published the reported conversation, and the same evening received a telegram from Father Ryan, which said: 'Have seen alleged interview with your representative in last evening's issue. I gave no interview to any pressman anywhere. Please contradict emphatically in next issue and publish this telegram.' The *Evening Mail* published the telegram as requested on the following day, but appended to it the following footnote: 'Apparently Father Ryan was unaware that he was talking to a press representative, and though he does not specifically contradict any particular statements, we willingly publish his telegram and accept his refutation while expressing our regret at any misapprehension on which our correspondent's story was based.'

By that time Casement was already travelling under police escort to Dublin. The train stopped at Killarney, and the local head constable came to his carriage and had a hurried conversation with the sergeant who was in charge of Casement. He overheard their conversation, in which they spoke of two members of the Volunteers who had been killed in a motor accident the evening before, when their car had dashed over a bridge at Killorglin into the sea. They were, in fact, two Volunteers who had been sent down from Dublin to assist in landing the cargo from the *Aud*, but Casement assumed at once that they must be his own companions, Bailey and Monteith. When the train moved on, the sergeant was surprised to find Casement break suddenly into an excess of weeping. He cried helplessly for some time and then asked the sergeant where Killorglin was. It was, as he had feared, in the proximity of the strand where the *Aud* was to have discharged her cargo. 'I am very sorry for those two men,' he said at last when he had recovered his composure. 'They were good Irishmen; it was on my account they came over here.'

From the newspapers, which he was allowed to see on his way

the upper hand since the outbreak of war would deliberately allow the preparations for a rising to come to a head without intervening to prevent them. The ascendancy of the Ulster Covenanters in the War Office had been manifest from the very first months after the outbreak of war. Redmond had staked his whole leadership of Irish Nationalism upon his own herculean effort to inspire enthusiasm for the Allies when war broke out. He had met with a response that had far exceeded his own expectations. He had raised two Divisions in the south of Ireland, as against Ulster's one. But he had appealed to Carson to come with him on the same platform to encourage recruiting in Ireland, and Carson had never even answered his invitation. The Ulstermen had been given their own divisional colours, and had all but elected their own officers, taken over from the leaders of the Ulster Volunteers. In the south, Redmond had been discouraged at every turn. He had found it all but impossible to get a commission for any Catholic. His own son had been refused a commission, though he was a member of Parliament, and was obliged to enlist as a private. And after months of such passive resistance his efforts had been brought to a standstill.

The formation of the Coalition Government had brought Carson and many of his principal Covenanters into the Cabinet, and their influence had soon been unmistakable, in the gradual enforcement of coercive measures, against Birrell's judgment, which had more and more played into the hands of the I.R.B. Only those who were in close touch with affairs in Whitehall were aware of how eagerly the news of an impending insurrection in Dublin had been welcomed amongst those who controlled the strings. At the Admiralty, where the news of Casement's departure from Germany had quickly come through, there was a fever of excitement for days before he landed. At the War Office the former upholders of the Curragh mutiny were beside themselves with exultation.

So far back as February, a note¹⁴ from Bernstorff in Washington to the German Foreign Office had been intercepted, which reported from John Devoy that a rising was to begin in Ireland on Easter Saturday, and that a cargo of German arms was to be

landed between Good Friday and Easter Saturday. A later cable of 4th March had been intercepted stating definitely that 'between 20th and 23rd April in the evening, two or three steam trawlers could land twenty thousand rifles and ten machine-guns with ammunition and explosives at Fenit Pier in Tralee Bay, Irish pilot boat to await the trawlers at dusk north of the Island of Inishtooskert, at the entrance of Tralee Bay, and show two green lights close to each other at short intervals.'

A week later another intercepted message had been decoded which announced that the Irish had accepted the proposition, and necessary steps had been taken. A long message on 12th March had given details of the precise signals to be used, and what each would mean. It concluded: 'In case a submarine should come into Dublin Bay in connection with the landing of anything, either material or officers, the signal *Ashling* would ensure immediate recognition. If a submarine should enter the Bay unconnected with any expedition no signal is necessary, and she should go right up to the Pigeon House which is now used as an electric plant and a sewage station where boats are constantly entering and leaving, and there are no nets.'

Still more details of the signals agreed upon had been intercepted well before the end of March. Two others, each more definite in their references to Casement, were intercepted early in April, and on 18th April another announced finally that 'delivery of arms must take place punctually on Sunday, 23rd April, in the evening. This is of the highest importance. As smuggling is impossible, the landing must be carried out rapidly.'

It was no wonder that the Intelligence departments in Whitehall were buzzing with excitement. The extraordinary inaction²¹ of the authorities whose business it was to prevent any lawless outbreak in Ireland was less easy to understand. Even in Dublin Castle, which had been strangely kept in ignorance of the earlier intercepted messages, it became known on 18th April that a ship had left Germany with rifles destined for Ireland accompanied by a submarine. The ship, they were informed, was due to arrive on 21st April, and the rising was to take place on Easter Eve. But even that most explicit message

provoked no preparations. The only immediate concern of Dublin Castle, apparently, was the general parade of the Volunteers which, as every one knew, was to take place on the very day for which the rising was announced by their secret intelligence.

There had been no lack of warnings from the responsible chiefs of the Royal Irish Constabulary, and from many other persons who had ample reason for expecting trouble. The *Irish Volunteer* newspaper, on sale in the middle of the week, had announced quite openly that 'arrangements are now nearing completion in all the more important brigade areas for the holding of a very interesting series of manœuvres at Easter. In some instances the arrangements contemplate a one or two day bivouac.' Yet even with those preparations being openly made, and with a definite warning that a German steamer carrying rifles, and escorted by a submarine, was on its way to Ireland, no move whatever was made by the authorities in Dublin Castle.

The Volunteers themselves assumed that action might be taken against them at any moment, and on Wednesday, a public discussion, which created intense excitement, took place in the Dublin Corporation, when Alderman T. Kelly read out a letter, which had been sent to him by the editor of *New Ireland*, that purported to be a copy of secret instructions for the wholesale arrest of the Volunteer leaders. The document was in fact a complete fabrication. It had been handed¹⁰ to Mr. Little by Rory O'Connor (who years afterwards was to seize the Four Courts on behalf of Mr. de Valera's party against the Free State Government), and O'Connor had stated that he got it from someone in Dublin Castle.

But Dublin Castle remained inactive, even when it had received the fullest warning of what was about to happen. Even Mr. Birrell, the Chief Secretary, was not requested to return from London. The Commander-in-Chief in Ireland, General Friend, was allowed to remain out of the country. Only Sir Matthew Nathan, the Under-Secretary, remained in charge, awaiting events with a stolid indifference that was amazing in so industrious a Civil Servant. He must have known what was

in contemplation before the real truth had yet dawned on John McNeill.

McNeill's first definite intimation of a serious intention to convert a parade into an insurrection had come to him on Thursday, when Casement was still in the submarine approaching Tralee. He got positive information that bridges and railways were to be blown up on Easter Sunday, and the information changed his whole attitude towards the situation. On Friday, the day of Casement's arrest, he decided to cancel the whole parade. His orders were published on Saturday, and repeated again in the Sunday newspapers. Yet even by that time, when Dublin Castle knew actually that Casement had landed and had been captured, and that the German steamer had been sunk off Queenstown Harbour, Sir Matthew Nathan did not feel any obligation to request the return to Ireland of either the Chief Secretary or the Commander-in-Chief. The races at Leopardstown were to be held as usual on Easter Monday, and even though most of the officers had arranged to attend the races, they were not warned to stay in barracks. No precautions of any kind had been taken, and the rising was allowed to develop without the slightest attempt at hindrance, until on Monday the volcano burst forth at the appointed hour.

The opportunity for which the Ulster Covenanters had been watching and praying since the beginning of the war, had come at last; and the process of blowing Dublin to smithereens, and of making wholesale indiscriminate arrests among all the Sinn Féin leaders, began under conditions which no Government in London could control.

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That such an astonishing development should arise was beyond the wildest calculations of even Casement's feverish imagination. He believed as he travelled over to London to meet his fate, that his own efforts had succeeded, and that by the sacrifice of his own life, he had forestalled a hopeless insurrection that could only end in appalling disaster. He had assumed that at least his trial would take place in Ireland, and he had counted upon vindicating his own activities in Germany

among his own countrymen. But the law which governed trials for high treason was much more complicated than he ever guessed; and in fact the only court that had jurisdiction to try him for conspiring with the King's enemies outside the realm was the Court of King's Bench in London.

He was brought accordingly to England, and lodged in the Tower of London under military imprisonment until 15th May, when, under a warrant issued two days previously, he was removed to Brixton Prison, and brought to Bow Street Police Court, for the preliminary stage of hearing the charge preferred against him. The form it took was that, 'On the 1st day of November, 1914, and on divers days thereafter, and between that day and the 21st day of April 1916, he unlawfully, maliciously, and traitorously, did commit high treason without the realm of England in contempt of our Sovereign Lord the King and his laws, to the evil example of all others in the like case offending, contrary to the duty of the allegiance of the said Sir Roger Casement to our said Sovereign Lord the King, and against the form of the Statute in such case made and provided.' The preliminary proceedings at Bow Street lasted for three days, during which he made no statement, and on 17th May he was committed for trial. He had employed as his solicitor Mr. George Gavan Duffy – the son of a famous Irish leader in the famine days, who afterwards became Prime Minister of New South Wales.

The tangled state of the law concerning treason created obstacles that aroused even a hope of acquittal which Casement had never contemplated as possible. He had never thought of any line of defence; his anticipation had been that, after a formal trial in Ireland, he would have made a speech from the dock before being sent to his execution. But the fact of being tried in London instead of in Ireland seemed to him an outrage, and when his solicitor told him that there was a possibility of quashing the indictment on purely legal grounds, he agreed to let the matter be argued out.

He harboured no hope whatever of escaping the death penalty. In the long months of disillusionment in Germany,



SIR ROGER CASEMENT, C.M.G.

*From a photograph taken in Germany. (Reproduced by kind permission of
Messrs Hodge and Company, publishers)*

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he had even longed for death, and now in the utter exhaustion which followed upon his long voyage in the hunted submarine, and which had been accentuated by the knowledge that all his efforts to save Ireland from an abortive rising had been in vain, he turned more than ever to the thought of death as the only true release. Even if he could stultify the court, and compel the Government to take some other form of punitive action against him, there was never the slightest shadow of hope that he could yet escape. In those frantic weeks in Germany he had foreseen the possibility that his trial might be dropped as a matter of policy, and that he might be sent to a lunatic asylum to end his days among criminal maniacs.

But he decided to allow his lawyers to make whatever defence they thought most likely to embarrass the Government, which had denied him a trial in his own country. Gavan Duffy had briefed Serjeant Sullivan, K.C., an advocate of the most moving eloquence and of great knowledge of the law and natural resourcefulness. And already funds¹⁴ had been cabled from America to engage the service of an American lawyer, Mr. Doyle, to assist in the defence.

The police-court at Bow Street had been crowded to suffocation when he appeared in the dock for those three days of preliminary argument. He was more worn than ever, with the confinement and the agony of spirit that he had endured almost without interruption, either in the submarine or in his cell in the Tower, during a whole month since he had sailed from Germany. His magnificently tall figure, his dark beard and brooding eyes, had created a deep impression on all who saw him; but his own thoughts had been far away. 'If this dark lean man, with a pointed beard,' wrote one of the newspaper representatives at Bow Street, Miss Edith Shackleton, 'had come out in an Elizabethan ruff and padded doublet, one would hardly have been surprised. Of all the men who were ever charged that they did . . . commit high treason . . . and have "lain in the Tower" this one, of the aeroplane age, surely looks the part as well as any.'

Only one figure in the court had really interested him, the

young Attorney-General, Sir F. E. Smith. Now knighted and a leading member of the Government, he had only two years before, been 'galloper' to General Richardson in the Ulster campaign, and his reckless speeches, both to his own constituents in Liverpool, and on the platforms of the Ulster Covenanters in Ireland, had brought him into the front rank of the younger English Unionists.

The contrast between the two men could not have been more striking. The tall, truculent Attorney-General, with his air of surprising youthfulness, his Oxford accent, his impeccable tailoring, his superbly arrogant self-confidence, was in fact conducting the first really important prosecution that had fallen to him since his fortuitous promotion to high rank in a Government of which Mr. Asquith was still Prime Minister. He seemed almost to personify ambition and a consuming desire for material success; and with his serenely truculent attitude, and his obvious enjoyment of his own intellectual gifts, he dominated any court in which he appeared. Only that sublime self-confidence and scorn for every adversary could have enabled him to undertake the prosecution with indifference to his own political reputation. For of all the English politicians who had thrown their energies into the promotion of sedition in Ulster, and into the effort to undermine discipline in the British Army as a means towards overthrowing the Liberal Government, he was supremely conspicuous.

For three days Casement watched him in the court, contemplating the rapid success which had been earned by a rising barrister who had won a seat in Parliament. He had made up his mind that his own speech from the dock was to be a reasoned statement of the events that had led to the formation of the Irish Volunteers; and in his exposition of the conditions that had induced him to seek aid from Germany for the liberation of Ireland from English political intrigues, he vowed that he would make the young Attorney-General accept his own full share of the responsibility.

It had been a relief to hear the Attorney-General announce that he desired to complete the prosecution at the earliest

possible moment. And as Casement went back to his cell in Brixton Prison from Bow Street, he could hope that there would not be many weeks to wait. Before being transferred there he decided that he would enter his religion as Roman Catholic, in the hope that the prison chaplain for Catholics would turn out to be an Irishman. He had been overjoyed to find that his hopes were justified. An Irish priest, Canon Murnane, had been brought to him and had greeted him with a friendly welcome that lifted an intolerable burden from his heart.

When he was transferred²⁴ from Brixton Prison to Pentonville he made the acquaintance of another Irish chaplain, Father Carey, who in the last weeks of his life was to become his closest friend. For years Father Carey had been the chaplain to several prisons, but in all his long experience he had never encountered any criminal of the type that now confronted him. A deep mutual affection arose between them from their first interview; and in the slow hours of lonely waiting in his cell, when his mind surged backwards and forwards in a fever of confused thought, while his days that were so closely numbered passed one by one, he longed for the company of the calm, gentle, Irish priest, who came to spend as much of his time as he could spare in Casement's company.

Five weeks dragged on until the morning of Monday, 26th June arrived, when Casement was led out from the prison under escort to appear for trial. The Lord Chief Justice, Viscount Reading, who had been Sir Frederick Smith's predecessor as Attorney-General, was the presiding judge; and beside him there sat Mr. Justice Avory and Mr. Justice Horridge, while a special jury was to try the case. The prosecution was in the hands of Sir F. E. Smith and Sir George Cave, assisted by Mr. Archibald Bodkin, Mr. Travers Humphreys and Mr. G. A. H. Branson, instructed by the Director of Public Prosecutions, Sir Charles Mathews. For Casement himself the defence was led by Serjeant Sullivan, K.C., assisted by Mr. Artemus Jones, and by Professor J. H. Morgan, as an expert on constitutional law. They were instructed by Mr. Gavan Duffy, and Mr. Michael Doyle of the American Bar was in court also to assist the proceedings.

To the outer world the verdict was already a foregone conclusion. Casement had heard with gratitude, but with indifference as to his own fate, of the steps already taken by a multitude of his former friends and allies in the campaign against the slave trade to organise an influential petition for his reprieve if the verdict should go against him. He did not know that a much stronger pressure was being exerted upon the Cabinet from Washington through the reports and the advice of the British Ambassador, Sir Cecil Spring Rice.

'The attitude of public opinion as to the Irish rebellion is on the whole satisfactory,' Spring Rice had written²⁵ to Sir Edward Grey on 19th May. 'The Press seems to be agreed that the movement is suicidal, and in the interests of Germany alone. The attitude of the majority of the Irish is uncertain, but if the movement spreads, the effect here will be very serious indeed. All are agreed that it will be dangerous to make Casement a martyr.' And a few days later the Ambassador was to write in still stronger terms: 'As regards Ireland, it is most unfortunate that it has been found necessary to execute the rebels, especially Skeffington. If this had been done in the first few days it might have been condoned. The continued executions have greatly excited the Irish here and given our enemies a welcome handle against us. As to Casement, the Irish might regard his execution as a small matter in comparison with the others. They might ask why Skeffington was executed and Casement spared. But the great bulk of American public opinion, while it might excuse executions in hot blood, would very greatly regret an execution some time after the event. This is a view of impartial friends of ours here who have nothing to do with the Irish movement. It is far better to make Casement ridiculous than a martyr. The universal impression here seems to be that, when here, he acted almost like a madman. There is no doubt whatever that the Germans here look forward with great interest to his execution, of which they will take full advantage. It is quite true that if he is spared, the fact that he is not executed will be used against us. But if he is executed, his execution would be an even more formidable weapon.'

Casement had no intimation of that powerful influence upon his own side as he faced his trial. Again the court was thronged with curious observers, and he surveyed the scene while the King's coroner read out the long indictment which accused him in circumstantial detail of having attempted on various occasions to seduce the allegiance of British prisoners of war in Germany, and of having taken part in a warlike expedition from Germany to Ireland in April. A copy of the indictment and of the list of witnesses had been served upon him weeks before. He could see some of the witnesses already in court – men of the Irish regiments whom he had last seen in the prison camp in Limburg more than a year ago, and who had since been repatriated.

His voice was clear when he rose to plead 'not guilty' in answer to the challenge, and the jurors were then separately sworn. He knew well that it would be an ordeal to listen to the speech that denounced him, and the fact that the speech was to be made by one of the most conspicuous English leaders of the Ulster agitation galled him fiercely. He listened intently while the tall elegant figure rose languidly and proceeded to expound the law, dating from the reign of King Edward III, which prescribed the conditions and the penalties of treason. He was impressive as he turned to the jury with his languid movement, and requested that they should mark closely whether the prosecution proved its case, and if so whether any extenuating circumstances could be urged, or whether, on the contrary, the crimes alleged 'are aggravated by the relationship in which the prisoner formerly stood to the Sovereign whom he has betrayed and the country at which he has struck.'

No element of drama in the case would be neglected in his experienced hands. The prisoner, he informed the jury, was 'an able and cultivated man, versed in affairs and experienced in political matters. He was not, as you will hear, a lifelong rebel against England and all that England stood for, as others well known in Irish history have been.' He recalled in rapid summary the various stages of Casement's career in the consular service, concluding with his retirement with a pension on

1st August 1913. 'Gentlemen,' the low, drawling voice continued, 'this pension had been honourably earned, and it would, therefore, be neither necessary nor proper to refer to it were it not for the sinister and wicked activities of the period which I am approaching.' He did not mention its amount – which was, in fact, £421 a year, payable quarterly, less income-tax – but he drew the jury's attention to the fact that the last claim for his quarter's allowance had been made by Casement in early October 1914.

There followed the inevitable allusion to Casement's knighthood. Memories came surging back as he remembered his own desperate and unavailing efforts to induce Edward Grey to expose the Peruvian Government by publishing his Putumayo report, and the mixed feelings with which he had received that personal tribute of confidence in himself which Grey's cordial letter announcing the conferment of a knighthood upon him had conveyed. The compliment had meant much to him in those days of physical exhaustion and of nervous strain; but he had known it was only a palliative in regard to the Peruvian Government, just one more polite intimation to them that the British Foreign Office took Casement's work in the Putumayo seriously, and that they did not mean to leave matters indefinitely as they were. And now it was to be flung in his own face as evidence of a deep-dyed treachery!

'It is perhaps worth while, having regard to the singular later developments of his career,' the provocative voice went on, 'to read the letter dated 19th June 1911 in which he replied to the notification communicated to him by Sir Edward Grey of His Majesty's intent to bestow a knighthood upon him. He wrote, this enemy of England, this friend of Germany, this extreme and irreconcilable patriot, in the following terms.' Casement could see what an effect this pleading was having on the jury. He had to hear a travesty of his own motives; but he had offered himself as a victim for the sacrifice, and the price was now being paid.

'What occurred between 1911 and 1914 to affect and corrupt the prisoner's mind I cannot tell you, for I do not know.' On

that point at least Casement would have something to say when the time came; and even the Attorney-General's serene self-confidence might be shaken before he was finished. The speech for the prosecution went on to describe the assembling of the Irish prisoners in Limburg camp. 'The Germans, as you know, are very expert in this species of activity. Ireland has been disaffected. Here, then, was a fruitful soil for seduction. Even then it may be that the scheme of an eventual landing in Ireland had been conceived by this thoroughly resourceful and unscrupulous people. The Irish prisoners of war were there – emotional, excitable, uniformed, the easy victims, it was hoped, of seduction. Nor was the seducer lacking; the letter-writer of 1911 was to be tested.'

So the skilful unfolding of the dramatic story of the effort to raise an Irish Brigade at Limburg went on. Then the landing of Casement himself at Tralee, and the sinking of the *Aud*, with her cargo of rifles and ammunition. There had been little rhetoric, and the statement had been all the more effective for its restraint, enlivened only by the occasional passages of biting irony. It ended almost suddenly as the Attorney-General, in quiet tones, expressed the hope that he had performed his task without either heat or feeling. 'The prisoner,' he said, in one solemn outburst before he sat down, 'blinded by a hatred to this country, as malignant in quality as it was sudden in origin, has played a desperate hazard. He has played it and he has lost it. To-day, the forfeit is claimed.'

There had been tense silence throughout his speech, and the strain relaxed for a few moments while the first witnesses were being called. There were two Civil Servants, from the Foreign Office and the Paymaster's Office, and then for hour after hour there followed the statements and the cross-examination of the repatriated prisoners who had come to give evidence concerning Casement's activities at Limburg. More than a dozen of them had been called and cross-examined, before the court rose after a long day's sitting.

There was little enough Sergeant Sullivan could attempt in cross-examining for the defence. His whole efforts were directed

to proving that Casement, in addressing the prisoners in Germany, had invariably spoken to them of forming a Brigade that would fight for Ireland and not for Germany; and in almost every case he had established his point. The second day of the trial was to give him more scope, when the police and other witnesses from the Kerry coast appeared. The court left him remarkable freedom in the circumstances, and he was able to extract considerable evidence concerning the state of Ireland at the outbreak of the war, when the Irish Volunteers had come into existence, as an agitation to oppose the campaign of the Ulster Covenanters. The line of his defence was unmistakable, but it left the jury indifferent and unconvinced.

A more practical line of defence was that the court had no jurisdiction to try Casement for high treason committed 'without the realm'; and the argument over that was to occupy many hours of the second day, and to be continued when the court met again on Wednesday. Throughout most of another day the long technical debate dragged on, concerning obsolete statutes printed in an old Norman French dialect which could only be understood with difficulty.

Casement's impatience grew as the days passed. The protracted strain of sitting in the dock, the centre of observation by so many hostile eyes, was telling upon him heavily. He longed for the argument to end. He was prepared to meet his fate; and these long-drawn-out proceedings were only a man-œuvre to contest the validity of the court. Whatever the verdict might be he could not escape, and he had no desire to prolong his own agony of suspense.

Hour after hour he sat there, lost in his thoughts, wondering why it was that his own life should have been so largely cast among prisoners. There had been those loathsome prison sheds beside the Congo – that filthy hut where he had seen those naked pregnant women chained together with an African sentry on guard over them; the stocks in every village that he had visited in the Putumayo, where unspeakable atrocities had been committed on the victims who were only to be flogged to death in the end. Why had it been his lot to be always among such

scenes? Even in Germany there had been the prisoners at Limburg, driven half mad with loneliness and with inactivity; and his own coming among them had not been welcomed. He had done what he could to help them, though they never knew it, even after they had disappointed him so intensely. Father Crotty alone knew how much he had done to get them special concessions, and how often he had given money, under pledge of secrecy, to provide comforts for the men who had rejected his appeals with so much indignation.

And now he was a prisoner himself. He had 'lain in the Tower,' and from there had been transferred to Brixton, and now to Pentonville. Where would they send him next? Why did they always keep on moving him from place to place? How he longed for the end to come, while this solemn farce was being played through before the Lord Chief Justice and his colleagues. If he could only get back to his cell at Pentonville, he would at least be able to send for the chaplain again, and the long hours would pass in a pleasant companionship such as he had not found for years. Father Carey and he had become friends in an intimacy that he had scarcely ever known before, except for that unexpected friendship with Father Crotty among the Irish prisoners at Limburg.

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At last they were finishing their argument, and their lordships had retired to confer. The slow minutes dragged on and on; and then the usher sprang to attention as they came back into court. Viscount Reading, with his handsome presence and his beautiful delivery proceeded to enunciate the long judgment which explained the whys and the wherefores that had led their lordships to hold that Serjeant Sullivan's motion could not be upheld, and that the indictment held good, and the trial must proceed. One more stage had been got through and at last Casement was to make his own first statement.

Rising to his full height, and with a voice that trembled at first, but soon grew steady, he claimed the right to make a brief reply to some of the statements that had been made against him. 'As to my pension and the honour of knighthood conferred upon

me,' he said at once, 'I will say one word only. The pension I had earned by services rendered, and it was assigned by law. The knighthood, it was not in my power to refuse. But, gentlemen, there are especially four misstatements given in the evidence against me which I wish to refute. First, I never at any time advised Irishmen to fight with Turks against Russians, nor to fight with Germans on the Western Front. Secondly, I never asked an Irishman to fight for Germany. I have always claimed that he has no right to fight for any land but Ireland. Thirdly, the horrible insinuation that I got my own people's rations reduced to starvation point because they did not join the Irish Brigade is an abominable falsehood. The rations were necessarily reduced throughout Germany owing to the blockade, and they were reduced for Irish prisoners at exactly the same time and to the same extent as for the German soldiers and the entire population of Germany. The other suggestion that men were sent to punishment camps at my instance for not joining the Irish Brigade is one that I need hardly pause to refute. It is devoid of all foundation.

'Fourthly, there is a widespread imputation of German gold. I owe it to those in Ireland who are assailed with me on this very ground to nail the lie once and for all. It was published by newspapers in America, and originally, I think, in this country; and I cabled to America and instructed my American lawyer, Mr Councillor Doyle, to proceed against those newspapers for libel. Those who know me know the incredibility of this malicious invention, for they know from my past record that I have never sold myself to any man nor to any Government, and have never allowed any Government to use me. From the first moment I landed on the Continent until I came home again to Ireland, I never asked for nor accepted a single penny of foreign money, neither for myself nor for any Irish cause nor for any purpose whatsoever, but only the money of Irishmen. I refute so obvious a slander, because it was so often made until I came back. Money was offered to me in Germany more than once, and offered liberally and unconditionally, but I rejected every suggestion of the kind, and I left Germany a poorer man than

I entered it. Money I could always obtain from my own countrymen, and I am not ashamed here to acknowledge the debt of gratitude I owe to many Irish friends and sympathisers who did freely and gladly help me when I was on the Continent; and I take the opportunity here of stating how deeply I have been touched by the generosity and loyalty of those English friends of mine who have given me proof of their abiding friendship during these last dark weeks of strain and trial.

'I trust, gentlemen of the jury, I have made that statement clearly and emphatically enough for all men, even my most bitter enemies, to comprehend that a man who, in the newspapers is said to be just another Irish traitor, may be a gentleman.

'There is another matter I wish to touch upon. The Attorney-General of England thought it consistent with tradition of which he is the public representative to make a veiled allusion in his opening address to the rising in Ireland, of which he has brought forward no evidence in this case from first to last, and to which, therefore, you and I, gentlemen, as laymen, would have supposed that he would have scrupulously refrained from referring. Since the rising has been mentioned, however, I must state categorically that the rebellion was not made in Germany, and that not one penny of German gold went to finance it.

'Gentlemen of the jury, I have touched on these personal matters alone because, intended as they were to reflect on my honour, they were calculated to tarnish the cause that I hold dear. That is all, my lords.'

He sat down again, while a movement ran round the court; Serjeant Sullivan, his face white with strain, rose to his feet. He was unaccustomed to the English courts, and the reputation of the Irish Bar for eloquence and for powerful advocacy was in some measure in his hands. The jury listened intently as he developed one of the most moving arguments ever heard before that court. 'Did the prisoner at the bar adhere to the King's enemies in Germany?' was the question upon which he asked them to concentrate their attention. In a long and brilliantly

sustained argument, he went through the most vital passages of the evidence for the prosecution, to prove from the words of the Crown's own witnesses that Casement had never once countenanced any idea of fighting in the war for Germany, but had only urged the training of Irishmen in arms for the liberation of their own country. It was passionately eloquent and moving; and even Casement in his jaded spirit listened closely, and with kindling interest.

'The Ulstermen had armed, and nothing was said to them; they drilled and nothing was said to them; they marched and counter-marched; the authorities stood by and looked at them. The police were powerless. They had great forces behind them, great names and men of position. What are you to do?' Serjeant Sullivan asked with a passionate appeal to the sense of English justice, 'when after years of labour your representatives may have won something that you yearn for, for many a long day, won it under the constitution, had it guaranteed by the King and the Commons, and you are informed that you should not possess it because those that disliked it were arming to resist the King and Commons, and to blow the statute off the book with powder? The civil police could not protect you, and the military forces would perhaps prove inadequate for your support. You may lie down under it; but if you are men, to arms: when all else fails you, defend yourself. If the civil government will not protect you, if the constabulary cannot secure your rights, if you cannot rely upon brigades, the ultimate resort for any man, in the protection of his constitutional freedom, is to stand with arms in his hands, and if a civil government can be terrorised into obtaining his rights, try if his attitude will not inspire them with sufficient respect to do what is right, and without fear, favour, or affection. That, gentlemen, is the case I present to you on behalf of Sir Roger Casement; that is the explanation of everything that he has done.'

It had been unlikely that any such appeal would have been allowed in the court; but Lord Reading had permitted an unusual latitude to the defence. Even the studied calm of the Attorney-General had shown signs of increasing restlessness; and

at any moment it was likely that Serjeant Sullivan would be called to order. A few minutes later he was stopped by an intervention from the bench. A brief argument followed about the admissibility of certain evidence, and then Serjeant Sullivan recapitulated very briefly his main argument for the defence. The strain on his highly-strung nerves had been great, and he was showing signs of inability to continue. His face was white and strained, and he paused, repeated himself after a moment's hesitation, and then wiping his forehead with a dazed gesture, announced that he had broken down.

The court adjourned at once, and on Thursday the trial commenced again for its fourth day. Mr. Artemus Jones had to continue the speech for the defence which had been interrupted by Serjeant Sullivan's illness, and then in his closing speech for the prosecution, the Attorney-General renewed his argument with the jury for a conviction. It was easy to break down the defence that had been put forward. Many of the witnesses had testified that in Limburg Camp Casement had repeatedly referred to the plan for landing Irish troops in Ireland as soon as Germany had won a sea battle, without waiting until the end of the war. And there was the damning evidence of the code, with its German characters which Casement had attempted to throw away before his arrest. There had never been the faintest hope of a favourable verdict, and Casement longed for the ordeal to end. The Lord Chief Justice had still to sum up, and it was almost three o'clock before he had concluded. The jury retired, and were absent for a whole hour before they returned to announce their unanimous verdict of 'Guilty.' The supreme moment had come, and Casement prepared to read out the long speech that he had composed.

He had written it out deliberately three weeks ago, he explained to the court, because he intended it to reach a much wider audience. Against the jurisdiction of the court he protested, and he would address his argument to his own countrymen. It was a long statement. It began by protesting against the application of a statute five hundred and sixty-five years old 'to deprive an Irishman to-day of life and honour, not for

adhering to the King's enemies, but for adhering to his own people.'

He ridiculed the obsolete statute on the ground that it was not even written in English and was framed in an era when the Kings of England were still Kings of France as well. In the centuries while the statute had remained unrepealed, it had never been invoked against Frenchmen, who were, under it, still the subjects of the English King, and who in the many wars with France had been traitors to the Kings of England under the terms of the statute. 'They did not assassinate them by law,' he asserted with growing bitterness. 'Judicial assassination to-day is reserved for only one race of the King's subjects, for Irishmen; for those who cannot forget their allegiance to the realm of Ireland.'

'I did not land in England,' he went on. 'I landed in Ireland. It was to Ireland I came, to Ireland I wanted to come, and the last place I desired to land in was England. . . . The example given by me was given not to Englishmen but to Irishmen. . . . I asked no Englishman to help me. I asked Irishmen to fight for their rights. If I did wrong in making that appeal to Irishmen, to join with me in an effort to fight for Ireland, it is by Irishmen and by them alone I can be rightfully judged. From this court and its jurisdiction I appeal to those whom I am alleged to have wronged and to those I am alleged to have injured by my evil example. . . . If they adjudge me guilty, then guilty I am. It is not I who am afraid of their verdict, it is the Crown. If this be not so, why fear the test? I demand it as my right.'

In that rhetorical strain he continued before turning to a vindication of his policy in regard to the Volunteers. 'Our movement,' he proclaimed, 'was not directed against the Ulster Volunteers, but against the men who misused and misdirected the courage, the sincerity, and the local patriotism of the north. On the contrary, we welcomed the coming of the Ulster Volunteers, even while we deprecated the aims and intentions of those Englishmen who sought to pervert and put to an English party use - to the mean purposes of their own

bid for place and power – the armed activities of simple Irishmen. . . . Our appeals were made to Protestant and Unionist, as much almost as to Catholic and Nationalist Irishmen. . . . I for one was determined that Ireland was much more to me than “Empire,” and that if charity begins at home, so must loyalty. Since arms were so necessary to make our organisation a reality, and to give to the minds of Irishmen menaced with the most outrageous threats a sense of security, it was our bounden duty to get arms before all else. I decided, with this end in view, to go to America, with surely a better right to appeal to Irishmen there for help in an hour of great national trial than those envoys of “Empire” could assert for their week-end descents upon Ireland, or their appeals for Germany. If, as the right honourable gentleman, the present Attorney-General, asserted in a speech at Manchester, Nationalists would neither fight for Home Rule nor pay for it, it was our duty to show him that we knew how to do both. Within a few weeks of my arrival in the States, the fund that had been opened to secure arms for the Volunteers of Ireland amounted to many thousands of pounds. In every case the money subscribed, whether it came from the purse of the wealthy man or the still readier pocket of the poor man, was Irish gold.’

Coming to his own decisions after the outbreak of war – which had put an end to his ‘mission of peaceful effort in America’ – he declared his own conviction that ‘if small nationalities were to be the pawns in this game of embattled giants, I saw no reason why Ireland should shed her blood in any cause but her own, and if that be treason beyond the seas, I am not ashamed to avow it or to answer for it here with my life. And when we had the doctrine of Unionist loyalty at last – “Mausers and Kaisers and ‘any King you like’,” and I have heard that at Hamburg, not far from Limburg on the Lahn – I felt I needed no other warrant than that these words conveyed – to go forth and do likewise.

‘The difference between us was that the Unionist champions chose a path they felt would lead to the Woolsack; while I went

a road that I knew must lead to the dock. And the event proves both were right. The difference between us was that my "treason" was based on a ruthless sincerity that forced me to attempt in time and season to carry out in action what I said in word – whereas their treason lay in verbal incitements that they knew need never be made good in their bodies. And so I am prouder to stand here to-day in the traitor's dock to answer this impeachment than to fill the place of my right honourable accusers.

'In Ireland alone in this twentieth century is loyalty held to be a crime,' he concluded in an impassioned outburst. 'If we are to be indicted as criminals, to be shot as murderers, to be imprisoned as convicts, because our offence is that we love Ireland more than we value our lives, then I know not what virtue resides in any offer of self-government held out to brave men on such terms.'

He had been speaking for nearly an hour before he reached his conclusion: 'My lord, I have done. Gentlemen of the jury, I wish to thank you for your verdict. I hope you will not take amiss what I said, or think that I made any imputation upon your truthfulness or your integrity when I spoke and said that this was not a trial by my peers. I maintain that I have a natural right to be tried in that natural jurisdiction, Ireland, my own country, and I put it to you, how would you feel in the converse case if an Englishman had landed here in England and the Crown or the Government, for its own purposes, had conveyed him secretly from England to Ireland under a false name, committed him to prison under a false name, and brought him before a tribunal in Ireland under a statute which they knew involved a trial before an Irish jury? How would you feel yourselves as Englishmen if that man was to be submitted to trial by jury in a land inflamed against him and believing him to be a criminal, when his only crime was that he had cared for England more than for Ireland?'

A tense silence followed, as the tall, dark figure sank down, exhausted. It was broken by the loud voice of the usher, commanding silence while the sentence of death was being

passed upon the prisoner. Lord Reading leaned forward slightly, and in his calm voice he addressed the prisoner: 'Sir Roger David Casement, you have been found guilty of treason, the gravest crime known to the law, and upon evidence which, in our opinion, is conclusive of guilt. Your crime was that of assisting the King's enemies, that is, the Empire of Germany, during the terrible war in which we are engaged. The duty now devolves upon me of passing sentence upon you, and it is that you be taken hence to a lawful prison, and thence to a place of execution, and that you be there hanged by the neck until you be dead. And the Sheriffs of the Counties of London and Middlesex are, and each of them is, hereby charged with the execution of this judgment, and may the Lord have mercy on your soul.' There was not a murmur in the crowded court while Justice Avory ejaculated his solemn 'Amen!'

And then the judges rose from their seats; the attendant policeman came forward to the dock; and Roger Casement was lead back to Pentonville.



In the weeks while Casement's trial had been impending, a violent reaction against the continued executions of those who had been connected with the Dublin rising had set in throughout England as well as Ireland. Mr. Asquith's hurried journey to Dublin, where he had even visited some of the insurrectionaries in hospital, had given a lead to the effort to prevent further bloodshed.

But against Casement particularly the popular fury that the rebellion had excited was still unabated. It was not only among his own friends, however, that a real effort²⁶ was made to withstand the angry clamour for his execution. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, as an Irishman with many distinguished military connections, was not a likely person to lead the forlorn attempt to save his life. But he was one of many who had assisted the heroic work that Casement had done for the suppression of native slavery before the war, and he organised a personal appeal to leading Englishmen to sign a petition to the Prime

Minister. It was ready when the trial was still taking place, and new signatures were added from day to day. By the time sentence of death had been passed upon Casement, he had already collected an impressive list of influential names. It was in the following terms:

‘To the Right Hon. H. H. ASQUITH,
‘Prime Minister.

‘Sir,

‘We, the undersigned, while entirely admitting the guilt of the prisoner Roger Casement, and the justice of his sentence, would desire to lay before you some reasons why the extreme sentence of the law should not be inflicted: –

‘(1) We would call attention to the violent change which appears to have taken place in the prisoner’s previous sentiments towards Great Britain (as shown, for example, in his letter to the King at the time of his knighthood) from those which he has exhibited during the war. Without going so far as to urge complete mental irresponsibility, we should desire to point out that the prisoner had for many years been exposed to severe strain during his honourable career of public service, that he had endured several tropical fevers, and that he had experienced the worry of two investigations which were of a peculiarly nerve-trying character. For these reasons it appears to us that some allowance may be made in his case for an abnormal physical and mental state.

‘(2) We would urge that his execution would be helpful to German policy, by accentuating the differences between us and some of our fellow-subjects in Ireland. It would be used, however unjustly, as a weapon against us in the United States and other neutral countries. On the other hand, magnanimity on the part of the British Government would soothe the bitter feelings in Ireland, and make a most favourable impression throughout the Empire and abroad.

‘(3) We would respectfully remind you of the object lesson afforded by the United States at the conclusion of their Civil

War. The leaders of the South were entirely in the power of the North. Many of them were officers and officials who had sworn allegiance to the laws of the United States and had afterwards taken up arms and inflicted enormous losses upon her. None the less, not one of these men was executed, and this policy of mercy was attended by such happy results that a breach which seemed to be irreparable has now been happily healed over.

‘Being ourselves deeply convinced of the wisdom of such a policy, we feel constrained to approach you with this petition, hoping that you may find yourself in agreement with the considerations which we advance. – We are, Sir,

‘Your obedient servants,

‘Sir T. Clifford Allbutt, K.C.B., Regius Professor of Physics at the University of Cambridge; William Archer; Sir Thomas Barlow, Bart., K.C.V.O., President of the Royal College of Physicians, London; Harold Begbie; Arnold Bennett; Robert Blatchford; Muirhead Bone; Hall Caine; the Rev. R. J. Campbell; G. K. Chesterton; the Rev. John Clifford; Edward Clodd; William Crooks; Sir Francis Darwin (2 and 3); W. Boyd Dawkins; Sir Arthur Conan Doyle; John Drinkwater; Sir James G. Frazer; the Rt. Hon. Sir Edward Fry, G.C.B.; John Galsworthy; A. G. Gardiner; Alice B. Gomme; G. P. Gooch; Maurice Hewlett; Silas K. Hocking; the Rev. Robert F. Horton; Jerome K. Jerome; John Masefield; H. W. Massingham; Sir William Robertson Nicoll; Sir Sydney Olivier; the Rev. Thomas Phillips, President of the Baptist Union; C. P. Scott, Editor, *The Manchester Guardian*; Clement K. Shorter; Ben Tillett; Beatrice Webb; Sidney Webb; the Rt. Rev. the Bishop of Winchester; Israel Zangwill.’

Asquith himself had been appalled by the severity with which martial law had been enforced in Ireland; and in response to Redmond's unceasing and importunate appeals, he had

promised on several occasions that no more executions would take place. But their continuance showed how fully the military junta had gained control. The information that kept on arriving from Washington was a further strong argument for a reprieve; and when it became known that Casement's counsel were appealing against the decision of the first trial, the question of reconsidering his sentence was seriously discussed many times. The Archbishop of Canterbury, who had taken an active part in denouncing the Congo atrocities in the House of Lords, after the publication of Casement's report, now exerted his personal influence behind the scenes on behalf of a reprieve.

In Ireland also an influential appeal was quickly organised by Colonel Maurice Moore and Miss O'Farrelly, who were joined by a number of well-known Irish men and women. They presented several petitions to the Prime Minister and to the Home Secretary, which disclaimed any sympathy with Casement's activities during the war, but emphasised the fierce revulsion of feeling in Ireland against the British Government, as a result of the reprisals that had followed upon the rising. The unexpectedness of the insurrection, and the awful destruction which had been inflicted upon the Irish capital, had at first produced an intense indignation and hostility against Sinn Féin. But the long series of sporadic executions, continuing week after week, and involving in some cases men like Sheehy Skeffington, who were notoriously unconnected with the rising, had caused bitter resentment.

While pointing out these undeniable facts of the situation, the petitioners urged particularly that 'inexcusable as Roger Casement's actions in this matter may be, it must be remembered that he had performed great services to the Empire and to humanity by his work in the Congo and Putumayo. His life had been spent serving the country in fever-stricken regions in West Africa and Brazil, where his health was permanently impaired. Returning to Ireland, sick and broken with disease after long years of exile, he found a state of affairs existing two

or three years ago which might easily distract his mind and upset his judgment.'

Upon Mr. Asquith particularly they urged that during his recent visit to Dublin he must have found it impossible to obtain any well-informed statement of Casement's activities in Germany. 'You certainly did not find him a national hero: and we venture to assume that you do not wish him to become a national hero. There is, however, one infallible way in which that can be done: and that way is to hang him. . . . There are multitudes who feel that the knight-errant in the cause of suffering humanity in the Congo and the Putumayo cannot be treated as if he were on the moral level of a common murderer. Those who saw him at his trial realised that his transgression of the law, however grave, left his own conscience clear. However much he may have outraged the instincts and principles which happily prevail where loyalty to one's own people and national aspirations is the same thing as loyalty to the State, he would walk to his death upright and unashamed. A large and growing number of Irish men and women would regard his execution not as a just and necessary punishment of crime, but as a cruel act of vengeance.'

The terms of these petitions on his behalf were known to Casement as he waited through the dreary weeks of suspense while his appeal was proceeding. It came before the Court of Criminal Appeal, before Justices Darling, Bray, Lawrence, Scrutton, and Atkin, on 17th July, and a highly technical legal argument continued for two days. Serjeant Sullivan's ingenuity failed to make any serious impression upon the court, and by a unanimous decision they rejected the appeal.

Casement had long lost hope. His mind was wholly occupied with other things. There was one passage specially in the Attorney-General's speech that rankled bitterly. He had 'eaten the bread of England' was the phrase in which that ambitious young lawyer-politician had described those years of ill-paid service, in fever-ridden climates, which he had given to the British consular service. The pension of £421 was all he had been left to face the future; a man not yet in his fifties, with

his health irrevocably ruined. But it had been thrown repeatedly against him at the trial. The Attorney-General, once galloper to the Ulster Volunteers, would receive in fees for his conduct of the prosecution in all its stages, far more than Casement would have drawn in the three years of his retirement, if he had been receiving his pension all the time. But more galling than the sneers about his pension was the constant insinuation that he had sold himself to Germany and had been paid by German gold. Would the truth on that matter ever be made clear, he wondered, as he thought of his good friend, Dr. Curry, whom he had first met in Munich when all his hopes had crumbled to ruin, and to whom he had entrusted the diary of his German mission to be published after his death.

In one of his last letters to Dr. Curry within a few weeks of his departure from Germany, he had written fiercely on that very point. His fastidiousness in refusing financial assistance had indeed been one of the chief reasons why the German Foreign Office had viewed him with distrust, and doubted whether he was in earnest in his mission. He had refused even to take money that was offered to him by von Wedel on behalf of the German-Irish Society in Berlin, at a time when he was lamenting bitterly how much he was held up by lack of funds to fight the British Minister in Norway. He had dismissed, with angry scorn, the proposal that he should sell the Findlay letter to the German Foreign Office. He regarded that as the most prized possession of his career, and he could not be expected to part with it.

He had been determined to avoid any action that might look like making money out of the Findlay episode. In the trunk full of papers, which he left to Dr. Curry, there were faithfully preserved at least forty letters from German publishers, who had offered him large sums if he would write a book for them, in which he could have exposed the whole Findlay affair to his heart's content. 'I declined, and am very glad I did so,' he wrote in his last letter to Dr. Curry on 26th March. 'I felt it was beneath me – and mean, too. The British Government and I were at war – they were trying to hit me hard, and they did a

low-down dirty thing – but I could not exploit their cowardly act for my benefit – nor indeed did I like the idea of holding them up to German public contempt in a personal matter. I had to publish my letter to Grey in self-defence – and once having charged them publicly in that official way, I could do no more with honour. I challenged them to meet me in Norway, and they refused or evaded the charge in silence and by spreading lies about me in the Press and in secret. For me to have produced a “shocker” on their action would have been to descend to their level almost. So much for the charge of my selling myself to the German Government and getting “German gold.” I refused two thousand marks for one hour’s talk even on the Findlay affair in Berlin in February 1915. See the letters proposing this among the many in the trunks. On the contrary, every penny I have spent in Germany has been “Irish gold” – money sent to me by Irishmen, and a good deal of this has gone into German hands. Far from my getting “German gold,” it is the Germans have had “Irish gold.” Since I came to Germany I have spent roughly about £2000, and many Germans have done well out of me.’

Death was approaching fast as he struggled to vindicate his own honour among those who would remember him. What a joyless life it had been as he looked back upon it – back to those early years of a wandering youth when he had longed to escape from the gentle glens of Antrim that were afterwards to call to him with their irresistible appeal of home. He had been homeless always, and terribly lonely, in spite of his gift for friendship, in spite of an idealism that had meant more to him at so many stages of his life than any human affection. Women had meant nothing to him, though he had very often been made aware of the attraction of his romantic appearance and of the still stronger fascination of his shy idealism. He was a nomad, a Don Quixote, searching for adventures, drawn most strongly to the quests which seemed the most impossible of attainment.

He had loved Africa in his youth – the burning sun, the vast expanses of forest and of river, the riotous growth of its vegetation, the unbounded leisure it offered to anyone who could lead a

simple life, where the bare needs were so easily satisfied, though he had not been born to live in that scorching climate which racked men's bodies – and souls. Even his inexhaustible energy, his insatiable thirst for great spaces, and for vast new lands, had not been able to withstand the equatorial sun. He had come home a broken man. His eyes, his ears, all his senses, had been filled with a richness of experience that few men in any generation had ever attained. 'He was the bravest man I ever knew,' writes Dr. Puleston, one of his friends of those early years on the Congo, when they had explored and hunted together through the trackless regions that Stanley had been the first to traverse. There was nothing that he had not dared; no phase of human experience he had not witnessed.

As he looked back during those long nights in his narrow cell in Pentonville, and the memories of so many years came back upon him, Ireland had always called him back – with a welcome that never failed, even when he returned as no more than the wreckage of what he had once been. He hungered for love, yet never found it. No woman meant to him what Ireland had come to mean, when he returned, a sentimental shipwrecked Don Quixote, still seeking for some high romance. He had gone out, like a love-sick madman, to tilt at his last windmill; and now here in the lonely stone-flagged cell in Pentonville, with its barred window, he was at the climax of his last adventure.

*

Yet he was not friendless even in Pentonville. Of late, as the long hours were so slow in passing, he had been reminded more and more closely of those days of anguish and disillusion he had spent at Limburg, when he had been a free man wandering among prisoners, offering them their freedom if they would only join with him in the pursuit of his own dream. It had been a nightmare to feel that he was free when they were caged; that his appeals to what he believed to be the noblest and highest aspirations were received by them as an invitation to betray what they held sacred.

How the position had been reversed in these past weeks,

since his own capture and imprisonment! The same men whom he had attempted to recruit for his Irish Brigade at Limburg were now free to walk the world, free even from the discipline of their military life, with no obligation beyond the duty of giving evidence to secure that he should be sentenced to death. He did not grudge them their liberty, nor envy them because life was still before them, while the numbered hours of his own last days on earth were running out. 'The finest thing God put into this earth is Death,' had been a saying of his in the Congo, which many of his old friends recalled as they thought of him in his solitary confinement.

There had been one bond between him and those Irish soldiers – in Limburg and now in Pentonville – had they but known it. One man alone had been capable of bringing consolation alike to them in their despair and their loneliness, and still more to him as the conscience-ridden propagandist who had attempted to undermine their loyalty. Father Crotty had been their friend in those days of stern endurance, and he had been Casement's friend no less – perhaps, indeed, as he looked back, the closest and the truest friend that he had ever known.

He had decided to write himself down as a Roman Catholic in the hope of meeting an Irish chaplain with whom he could talk on sympathetic terms. Luck favoured him when he made the acquaintance of Father Carey as the prison chaplain at Pentonville. They saw much of each other as the days passed; they talked of Father Crotty and of the consolation that he had been able to bring to all the prisoners in that soulless German camp – even to those who had scarcely been able to converse with him in strange languages. And as Casement talked to his new friend, he confessed that he had been so much impressed by watching Father Crotty's influence over the men in face of death, that he had even asked Father Crotty to instruct him with a view of his becoming a Catholic. He told how, later on, he had continued his spasmodic approaches with the same object under the guidance of one of the German priests in Munich.

What he said aroused in the Irish priest at Pentonville an

unbounded curiosity and sympathy. Father Carey had seen many men preparing for death in the prisons where he had been a chaplain for nearly twenty years. All the previous years of their lives seemed always to fade into insignificance; and a new perspective would suddenly transform their outlook upon life, when only a few days remained, before they went out to face the end. So many of them had asked that they might become Catholics; and he had wondered at times how far it was due to some peculiar gift of sympathy on his own part. With Casement at least there could be no question of that kind; but his inclination towards Catholicism had apparently been growing for a considerable time. As an Ulsterman he could not be expected to sentimentalise over the Catholic Church and its ritual – simple enough though that was, when a priest came with his little handbag, containing a stole and a prayer-book and a few candles, from cell to cell. There had been cases of well-known politicians whose lot had been cast among the Irish Catholics and who had been drawn to the Catholic Church by political emotionalism. But with Casement, there seemed to be very little tendency of that kind; his intellect seemed more calm and less swayed by emotion while he faced his death.

The question arose again in their daily conversations, and Casement talked with so much insistence about his attraction towards Catholicism that Father Carey asked whether he had any Catholic connections in his own family. It had been a complete surprise when Casement told him that his own mother had been a Catholic, though she ceased to be a practising one after her marriage. He could remember how on a summer holiday in Wales, when they had all been little children, his mother had found a Catholic chapel at the seaside where they were staying, and there she had brought her whole family one day. He could still remember that they met the priest and that he had ‘splashed water over them.’

It dawned suddenly upon the prison chaplain that Casement had in fact been baptized in a Catholic Church at his own mother’s request. He was a man of methodical mind, impatient of mysteries, and he demanded further details of where this

early incident in Casement's life had happened. Instituting inquiries immediately, he ascertained that Casement had, in fact, received a Catholic baptism as a small child at Rhyl. He was a Catholic already, although he had never known it; and for the priest it became a definite obligation²⁷ to 'reconcile' him to the Church of his baptism.

Nothing had been further from his thoughts at their first meeting; but he set himself with grim determination to convince this strange adventurer, who had seen so much of life in many lands, that there was only one true Church, and that he himself had been made a member of it in his infancy, but had never learned its truths. It was a big task to undertake. Their daily conversation became a continuous theological argument. It was plain that their beliefs were still poles apart. Even in the political field, Casement was utterly out of sympathy with the Papacy; in his general opinions, he was a free-thinking rationalist. Yet the end was drawing near with strides that seemed to hasten as the appointed day approached. The problem of eternity became a practical question, that he had never troubled about particularly before, not even on the countless occasions when he had gone with his life in his hands. It was no ordinary priest that Casement had met in this chance encounter; and the logical controversies that filled those fleeting days made an enormous impression upon his mind.

It was not so much a question of proving the divinity of the Catholic Church as of agreeing upon the reasonableness or otherwise of unbelief. And as those last days passed, Casement's own easy conviction about the unimportance of religious belief was strangely shaken. A battle between two men of remarkable intellect was in progress, and they enjoyed it fully on both sides. And then, quite suddenly, Casement's resistance broke down. He announced that his own convictions would support him no longer.

That forgotten ceremony in a little chapel in Wales had made him a Catholic already, and if he desired to become reconciled to his Church before he died, there was no need for any ceremony beyond the usual preparation for death. It

involved only the ordinary sacramental confession. In Germany he had told his Catholic friends at Riederau how much he was attracted by the idea of confession as one of the common practices among Catholics. He had seen it in the prison camp in Limburg; and now in his own prison cell he was to feel, in a way that he had never dreamed, how enormous was the attraction of receiving spiritual absolution in which a man could believe. There were special circumstances which made it desirable to call in another priest. He had already obtained Father Carey's promise to deliver certain documents and certain messages that were to reach his friends after he was dead. If it became known – as Casement now wished – that he had died a Catholic, there might be a suspicion of confessional secrets having been revealed if Father Carey should become his confessor.

It was easy to meet the difficulty. Canon Ring, the rector of one of the largest Catholic churches in the east end of London – built by his own labours – was Father Carey's most intimate friend, and a staunch Irishman, like himself. With him also Casement at once established terms of complete sympathy and understanding. The end was already very near. All the various appeals and arguments for his reprieve had been considered closely both by the Ministers in charge and by the Cabinet as a whole. Asquith's desire for a commutation of the sentence had been overruled in a Cabinet where the Ulster Covenanters were strongly represented.

The execution was timed to take place early on the morning of 3rd August, within the grounds of Pentonville prison. Canon Ring had not only heard Casement's confession. He became a constant visitor in those last hours of interminable waiting. They had prayed together in the little prison chapel, that recalled – in such different conditions – the wooden hut where he had so often sat among the Irish prisoners while they prayed at Limburg.

They walked about the prison grounds together – the doomed man and the two Irish priests, throughout the day before the execution. The gloom and the tension which had

all but deprived him of his reason in those earlier weeks of his imprisonment had completely vanished. He went back to his cell to sleep peacefully through the night before the hangman was to end his days.

Early in the morning he attended Mass in the prison chapel and received the sacraments. When he was back in his cell the two priests came together to greet him, and to be with him while he had his breakfast. Not a tremor in his voice or his hands gave any sign of violent emotion. He ate what was brought to him, while he talked with the two Irish priests, who watched him with infinite gratitude for his courage. For nearly an hour they prayed together in silent companionship in his cell, until the door was opened nervously, and the doctor looked in to ask if he could do anything for the man who was to be hanged. Casement answered cheerfully that he needed nothing.

Then a warder came quickly in, and after strapping his hands behind his back, led him out towards the scaffold. He spoke only once again, as he smiled for the last time to his two friends. Only a few more seconds remained; the priests were on their knees reciting prayers. The cord was fastened round his neck, and then the trap-door fell. Straight as a lance, the tall, proud body dropped without a tremor into the pit.

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The silence of death hung over the prison, and in hundreds of cells the other prisoners – some of them²⁸ conscientious objectors who have since become famous men in English public life – were waiting in morbid suspense to hear the solemn tolling of the great bell which would announce to the world that the traitor had been executed. A great crowd had gathered around the prison gates to listen for the signal, and within a few minutes the bell tolled loudly. A shout of triumph rose from the street outside and could be heard all through the prison. Then silence fell again.

The crowd dispersed; the newspaper reporters and photographers hurried away to their offices to have their news and their pictures in time for the early editions. Only a few of them

still lingered at the gate, on the chance of hearing or seeing something that the others had missed. The gate opened and they saw two black-coated Irish priests come slowly out. One young reporter, more enterprising than the rest, recognised Father Carey as the Catholic chaplain, and asked boldly was the rumour true that Casement had become a Catholic before he died. If so, had he made a last confession? and had the chaplain any statement to make concerning it?

There was a long pause before Father Carey collected himself sufficiently to answer, and then he turned towards the young man who had spoken to him. He answered slowly, in a soft Irish voice, unchanged by many years of residence in London: 'You have asked me a question which is a secret between Sir Roger Casement and his God.'

After the index follows a facsimile of a copy of the 'treaty' signed between Casement and the German Foreign Office concerning the formation of the Irish Brigade. This copy in Casement's handwriting was given by him to a friend in Germany, by whose kind permission it is here reproduced.

NOTES

1 (page 29). The following chapter is primarily an account of Casement's official investigation and report, which was published as a White Paper by the Stationery Office [Africa, No. 1 (1904) Cd. 1933]. Many books and pamphlets were published concerning the Congo atrocities, and there were important debates in Parliament both in London and Brussels. The present narrative is intended simply to show Casement's part in the controversy. The direct result of his report was the overthrow of King Leopold's personal administration, and the introduction of a new regime under which the Belgian Government assumed direct responsibility for the future.

2 (page 103). This quotation from Sir Basil Thomson's reminiscences (entitled *Queer People*) is an example of the mean and stupid attempts to discredit all Casement's earlier work because of his political activities during the war. A similar attempt is also made by Lord Birkenhead in his account of the Casement trial, which is little more than an expansion of his own speech for the prosecution. He has added a few general comments which show a surprising ignorance of Casement's real activities in Germany during the war. In the following chapter I have drawn chiefly upon Casement's full reports on his two journeys to the Putumayo, which were published, together with all the official correspondence, as a Blue Book (Cd. 6266 of 1912). The Blue Book shows conclusively that Casement's inquiry was conducted in presence of a Commission appointed by the Company concerned in the charges which he had to investigate, and that all the most important evidence was given in their presence. After Casement's exposure, the Company, which had a registered capital of £1,000,000, was compulsorily wound up, on the petition of certain shareholders. The judgment delivered by Mr. Justice Swinfen Eady, on 19th March 1913, was a scathing indictment. It was reproduced as a pamphlet by the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society of London.

3 (page 185). A large number of extracts from these speeches, collected from the contemporary newspaper reports, are contained in Mr. J. J. Horgan's pamphlet, *The Complete Grammar of Anarchy*.

4 (pages 192 and 227). The publication of Sir Henry Wilson's diaries shows this quite clearly and in close detail. See Chapters VIII and IX of Vol. I of *Field-Marshal Sir Henry Wilson: his life and diaries*, by Major-General Sir C. E. Callwell.

5 (page 194). Casement wrote, under the signature 'Batha MacCrainn,' an article on 'Ireland and the German Menace' in the *Irish Review* for

September 1912. His article on 'Ireland, Germany, and the Next War' appeared in the same review for July 1913.

6 (page 206). Quoted by Mr. J. L. Redmond-Howard in his pamphlet, *Sir Roger Casement*, published in Dublin while the appeal against Casement's trial was pending.

7 (page 207). See *Misfit*, by Captain J. R. White, D.S.O.

8 (pages 211 and 235). For the story of the Irish Volunteers see particularly Bulmer Hobson's *History of the Irish Volunteers*; The O'Rahilly's *Secret History of the Irish Volunteers*; and Stephen Gwynn's *John Redmond's Last Years*.

9 (page 217). In the *Irish Review* for February and March 1914, Casement published, under the signature 'An Irish American,' two extremely bitter articles dealing with the cancellation of the German liners' intended call at Queenstown. They were entitled 'From Coffin Ship to Atlantic Greyhound,' and analysed the growth and the profits made by the British transatlantic shipping services from the enormous exodus of Irish emigrants during the famine years, 1845-47.

10 (pages 218, 220, 236, 237, 354, 400). Personal information obtained by the author from various sources at first hand.

11 (page 221). The official correspondence and documents referred to in this section were published as a White Paper, in response to demands from the House of Commons, after Seely's resignation in April 1914. For other information concerning the Curragh mutiny, see the published reminiscences of General Macready, General Seely, and Sir Wyndham Childs, and the diaries of Sir Henry Wilson.

12 (pages 233 and 238). A full account of preparations for the gun-running at Howth is given in Darrell Figgis's *Recollections of the Irish War*. Further information is contained in Shane Leslie's memoir of Brigadier-General Gordon Shephard; Conor O'Brien's *From Three Yachts*; and Bulmer Hobson's *History of the Irish Volunteers*.

13 (pages 238, 257, 276). For the following and other extracts concerning the earlier part of Casement's mission to Germany, I am indebted to Dr. Curry's volume, *Sir Roger Casement's Diaries: his mission to Germany and the Findlay Affair*, published in Munich, 1922.

14 (pages 255, 310, 312, 398, 403). This and a series of other messages intercepted by the British Secret Service are included in *Documents Relative to the Sinn Féin Movement* (Stationery Office, Cd. 1108 of 1921).

15 (page 299). See sworn statements collected from repatriated prisoners of war and published in a Government White Paper, 1918.

16 (page 300). See Wolfe Tone's Autobiography *passim*.

17 (page 301). The story of Casement's attempt to form an Irish Brigade at Limburg Camp has been derived chiefly from the following sources: evidence of repatriated prisoners of war, given under cross-examination at Casement's trial; Mr. McKeogh's narrative of his experiences, in the *Catholic Bulletin* (Dublin) Jan.-Dec., 1923; two articles in *Land and Water*, November 1919; Casement's German diary (partly in Dr. Curry's volume, and partly as published in the *Irish Independent*, April 1922); and personal information from first-hand sources.

18 (page 363). The following section of Casement's adventures in Germany is derived partly from personal information, but chiefly from the serialised extracts from his diary published in the *Irish Independent* in April 1922. This part of his diary is not included in Dr. Curry's volume. Several interesting references to Casement also occur in Princess Blücher's *An English Wife in Berlin*.

19 (page 364). Robert Emmet's speech from the dock after he was sentenced to death is very well known in Ireland, particularly for the passage: 'Let no man write my epitaph. . . . When my country takes her place among the nations of the world, then, and not till then, let my epitaph be written.'

20 (pages 376 and 366). A very interesting letter from John Devoy which throws much light on Casement's position in regard to the Irish-American Fenians is published in the Stationery Office White Paper *Documents Relative to the Sinn Féin Movement*. The letter was addressed to Lawrence de Lacey, who had escaped from Enniscorthy in February 1915. It was found on his premises in San Francisco after the United States had entered the war, when raids were made on many persons known to be in touch with von Igel and other German secret agents in U.S.A. Devoy's letter blames Casement for having wrecked the Irish rising, and gives his candid opinion of Casement's efforts in Germany. Part of it is as follows:

'The betrayal of the information about the shipload of arms by Wilson's men enabled the English to catch the vessel. There is no doubt at all about this. They got in the raid on von Igel's office a note of mine - the transcript of a message received in cipher from Dublin and wirelessly to Berlin the day before - 17th April - a request not to land the arms before the night of Sunday, 23rd. That was its meaning but it used the word "Goods." It was at once given to the English and they sent out their patrol boats and caught the ship. Then they sent troops to Tralee and reinforced Limerick.

'That would not have spoiled the rising, because if they were in the field other shiploads would have been sent. Casement did the rest. He landed on Friday and sent a message to McNeill to stop it; that it was hopeless, etc. McNeill got it on Saturday and issued his countermand. He got one message up by Monteith, who, of course, was obeying orders, and sent another by a priest, for whom he sent after his arrest. McNeill had only been told of the decision on Good Friday - which was a great mistake. He was at first shocked, but on hearing of the shipload of arms consented. Then the Limerick and Kerry men got word to him of the sinking of the ship, and

that, with the request from Roger, decided him and he issued the fatal order and took care that it reached everybody.

'From our experience of a year of his utter impracticability – he had been assuring us, till we were sick, that "there was no hope for the poor old woman" until the next war – we sent with the first note from home transmitted to Berlin a request that R *be asked to remain there*, "to take care of Irish interests." We knew he would meddle in his honest, but visionary way to such an extent as to spoil things, but we did not dream that he would ruin everything as he has done. He took no notice whatever of decisions or instructions, but without quarrelling, pursued his own dreams. The last letter I got from him, written last December, said the only hope now of making a demonstration that would impress the world was to send the "Brigade" to Egypt. *To impress the world by sending sixty men to a place where they could do nothing.* We had told him nearly a year before that we would not consent to this, but he took no notice.

'He was obsessed with the idea that he was a wonderful leader and that nothing could be done without him. His letters always kept me awake on the night of the day I got them. Miss R says he told Duffy that the Germans treated us shamefully, and that he had hard work to get the few arms that were on that ship; that they were no good, etc. Well, they were good enough for the Russians to overrun East Prussia with, and to drive the Austrians across the Carpathians, and if our fellows had got them they'd be able to shoot a good many Englishmen with them. It is not true that the Germans treated us badly; they did everything we asked, but they were weary of his impracticable dreams and told us to deal directly with them *here*. He had no more to do with getting that shipload than the man in the moon. The request was made from Dublin and we transmitted it from here. They replied in nine days and the message was sent to Dublin by a girl who had brought out the request.

'He told Dublin that he wanted to be landed in Galway, to go to Dublin and lay the situation before them – that is, to tell them that Germany was not sincere, etc., and then if they decided to fight that *he would go out and die with them*. Every note he struck was one of despair. And he told everything to every fellow who called on him. Christensen, who "saved" him, is one of the worst crooks I ever met, and was in the pay of the English all along. He, Casement, was warned of that from Ireland, and the first thing he did was to tell the fellow himself, and to give him the name of the man who had warned him. Christensen was going over from here to testify against him, and incidentally to give away all our secrets that he had got from Roger, *but we kept him here*.

'I don't want you to tell any of this – I mean about Roger – to anyone except Father Yorke, but the rest you can use your judgment about.

'If that countermand had not been issued they could have taken Dublin, and the big force that was concentrated on Dublin would have to be divided up. They would not have known where to send it for a while, and a lot of soldiers would have joined.

'Only 1500 men fought in Dublin and they held up an army of 20,000 or 25,000 Britishers for a whole week. Only 800 turned out at first; the rest came later, but after Tuesday those who wanted could not get near them

and were half crazy. Our fellows had only 103 killed and wounded. The English had 2700.'

Another intercepted letter from America, with direct news from Ireland, quoted in the same White Paper, includes the following illuminating comment: 'It has become apparent that Casement cherished the conviction that foreigners were indiscreet, and he alone, by his personal influence, could bring about the liberation of his country. He seems, in fact, to have credited himself with supernatural powers. He sent orders to McNeill (by a messenger) that the rising must wait till he (Casement) had arrived in Dublin or London. Consequently, at the moment when the rising could no longer be postponed, there were only 1500 instead of the expected 5000 men available, and the reinforcements which hurried up from the other parts of the town and suburbs could not get a chance to take part in the fighting. Had 5000 men been available, the castle and harbour could have been seized, and the latter kept under control. In that case, the insurgents might well have been able to hold out for several weeks.'

One cannot but wonder what the effect would have been if these candid testimonies from the real authors of the Irish Rising had been available to those who strove hard to secure a reprieve for Casement. Devoy's letter, thus published in an official compilation by the Stationery Office, disposes once and for all of the emphatic statement, issued by the Coalition Government immediately after his execution, that the theory of his having tried to stop the Irish Rising was 'conclusively disproved.'

21 (page 388). The deposition of Bailey, made after his arrest (quoted in *The Trial of Roger Casement*, published by Hodge) gives an account of the journey by submarine from Kiel to Ireland.

22 (page 390). The story of the Irish rising has been told in detail in several books, notably the volume by N. Marlowe and W. B. Wells. For the inner history of the Rising, from the side of the Irish Volunteers and of the Republican leaders, see Beazley's *Life of Michael Collins*; P. S. O'Hegarty's *Victory of Sinn Féin*; Eimar O'Duffy's *The Wasted Island*; and Darrell Figgis's *Recollections of the Irish War*. The inactivity of the Government authorities was discussed at length in the evidence, and strongly commented on in the report, of the Hardinge Commission on the Rebellion in Ireland (Cd. 8311 of 1916).

23 (page 396). See evidence given at Casement's trial. Sir Basil Thomson in his reminiscences (*Queer People*) states that he interviewed the captain and crew of the *Aud* at Scotland Yard, but that their statements were contradictory.

24 (page 405). Sir Basil Thomson states that Casement was removed from the Tower because there was no provision there for dealing with 'suicidal cases.' Actually Casement had promised Father Crotty before he left Germany that he would not in any circumstances attempt to commit suicide.

25 (page 406). See *Letters and Friendships of Sir Cecil Spring Rice*.

26 (page 419). A number of petitions for Casement's reprieve are published as an appendix to *The Trial of Roger Casement* (Hodge). Many individual efforts were also made, including that of the Archbishop of Canterbury, concerning which I have obtained direct information. See also the very interesting pages dealing with Casement's trial in H. W. Nevinson's *Last Changes, Last Chances*.

27 (page 429). A detailed account of Casement's 'reconciliation' as a Catholic before his death was published anonymously in the *Catholic Bulletin* (Dublin) soon afterwards. It was written with inside knowledge. Father Carey, who has since died, was part author of the account. I have been able to supply further details in the present narrative.

28 (page 431). See evidence given by the Principal of Ruskin College, Oxford, before the Royal Commission on Capital Punishment, July 1930.

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On the next page follows a facsimile of a copy of the 'treaty' signed between Casement and the German Foreign Office concerning the formation of the Irish Brigade. This copy in Casement's handwriting was given by him to a friend in Germany, by whose kind permission it is here reproduced.

Article I

With a view to securing the national freedom of Ireland, with the moral and material assistance of the Imperial German Government, an Irish Brigade shall be formed from among the Irish soldiers or other natives of Ireland, now prisoners of war in Germany.

Article 2.

The object of the Irish Brigade shall be to fight solely in the cause of Ireland, and under no circumstances shall it be employed or directed to any German end.

Article 3.

The Irish Brigade shall be formed and shall fight under the Irish Flag alone. The men shall wear a special, distinctive, Irish uniform.

As soon as Irishmen can be got for the purpose, either from Ireland or the United States, the Brigade shall have only Irish officers.

Until such time as Irish officers can be secured German officers will be appointed with the approval of Sir Roger Casement, to have disciplinary control of the men. But no military operation shall be ordered or conducted by the German officers of the Brigade during such time as the men are under their control.

Article 4.

The Irish Brigade shall be clothed, fed, and efficiently equipped with arms and munitions by the Imperial German Government on the clear understanding that these are furnished it as free gifts to aid the cause of Irish independence.

It is distinctly understood and is hereby formally declared by the Parties to this Agreement that the Irish Brigade shall consist only of Volunteers in the cause of Irish national freedom, and as such no member of the Irish Brigade shall receive pay or monetary reward on any kind - even the Imperial German Government during the period he shall bear arms in the Brigade.

Article 6.

The Imperial German Government undertakes, in certain circumstances, to send the Irish Brigade to Ireland with efficient military support and with an ample supply of arms and ammunition to equip the Irish national Volunteers in Ireland who may be willing to join them in the attempt to recover Irish national freedom by force of arms.

understood are the following:

In the event of a German naval victory affording the means of reaching the Coast of Ireland, The Imperial German Government pledges itself to dispatch the Irish Brigade and a supporting body of German officers and men, in German transports, to attempt a landing on the Irish Coast

Article 7.

The opportunity to land in Ireland can only arise if the fortune of war should grant the German Navy a Victory that would open, with reasonable prospect of success, the sea-route to Ireland.

Should the German Navy not succeed in this effort the Irish Brigade shall be employed in Germany, or elsewhere, solely in such way as His Royal Government may approve as being in strict conformity with Article 2.

In

to employ the Irish Brigade' to assist
the Egyptian People to recover their
freedom by driving the British
out of Egypt. Short or directly
sightings to free Ireland from British
rule a blow struck at the
British rule in Egypt, to aid
Egyptian national freedom, is a
blow struck for a kindred cause
to that of Ireland.

Article 8.

In the event of the Irish Brigade
volunteering for this service the
Imperial German Government
undertakes to make arrangements
with the Austro-Hungarian Government
for its transport through that Empire
to Constantinople, and to provide
with the Turkish Government for
the recognition and acceptance
of the Irish Brigade as a Volunteer
Corps attached to the Turkish Army
in the effort to expel the British
from Egypt.


In the event of the war coming to an end without the object of the Irish Brigade having been effected, namely its landing in Ireland, the Imperial German Government undertakes to send each member of the Brigade who may so desire it to the United States of America, with the necessary means to land in that country in conformity with the United States Immigration Laws.

Article 10.

In the event of the Irish Brigade landing in Ireland, and military operations in that country resulting in the overthrow of British authority, and the creation of a native Irish Government

The Imperial German Government
will give the Irish Government so
established its fullest moral support,
and both by public recognition
and by general goodwill will
contribute, with all sincerity,
to the establishment of an
independent government in
Ireland.

acknowledges and


Deutsches Reich

Sealing the

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